

# FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

The  
20

**NEW RULES OF  
COMPOSITION**

What they won't teach  
you at art school...

*Turn to page 82*



*Expert techniques*  
**Master mixed media in Painter**  
**Sketch comic crowd scenes**  
**Paint epic battles in ArtRage**  
**Draw realistic feathers**

*Create amazing*  
**CHARACTER ART**

Design and paint creatures for the movies – exclusive workshop  
from Hollywood concept artist Neville Page

*workshops start on page 68*

**GREG HILDEBRANDT ON STAR WARS, LOTR AND LIFE WITHOUT TIM...**

*Turn to page 52*

**2 COVER  
SPECIAL EDITION**

**HUMAN  
OR ALIEN?**

Collect them both!



**INTERACTIVE  
LIFE DRAWING**

Five rotatable poses on  
your DVD, plus expert  
tuition in the mag

*Figure painting  
materials – page 98*



Which do you prefer? Alien or human?  
Can't decide? Get your hands on both of  
these collector's edition covers.



*Cover artist*  
**JOHN KEARNEY**

**COUNTRY:** UK

**SOFTWARE USED:** Photoshop

**WEB:** [www.brushsize.com](http://www.brushsize.com)

ImagineFX favourite John Kearney took up the challenge to create our special collectable two cover edition this month. After being briefed by



IFX art editor Marcelo, John developed and painted both images in just over a week – a testament to his artistic talent. Here you can

see half of both images and some of John's sketches – but the only way you'll get to see both in full is to pick up both collector's covers. Tell us what you think by emailing [covers@imaginefx.com](mailto:covers@imaginefx.com)



Above: Development sketches by John after receiving our brief. Both images took just over a week and a half to produce.



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### THANKS TO

Greg Hildebrandt; Modelalisa and you guys!

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ImagineFX Subscriptions, Future Publishing, FREEPOST

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SUBSCRIPTION QUERIES 0870 837 4722

BACK ISSUES 0870 837 4773

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS +44 1858 438794

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Marketforce (UK) Ltd +44 (0) 20 7633 3333

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# Featured artists

ImagineFX calls on the finest digital artists in the world to offer you the best guidance and to share their techniques and inspiration...



## Anthony Scott Waters



The renowned magic card artist joins ImagineFX this month to bring you an exclusive

workshop. Anthony explains the process behind his weird and wonderful paintings on page 68. We also caught up with him to discuss his inspirations, imagination and vision in our six-page Master of Art interview, beginning on page 44.

[www.thinktankstudios.com](http://www.thinktankstudios.com)



## Gary Tonge



One of the UK's most successful art directors and artists, Gary Tonge brings you his rules of

composition in an insightful feature, beginning on page 82. Discover the secrets to creating beautiful environments and techniques that will help you produce better images - every time. Gary also brings his talent to our Artist Q&A on page 38.

[www.visionafar.com](http://www.visionafar.com)



## Neville Page



Concept artist Neville Page has worked with some of the most influential directors in

Hollywood - and is currently involved in James Cameron's new blockbuster. Neville stops by on page 74 to explain his process of creating character concepts for movies using ZBrush and Photoshop. If you're into concept art, you can't afford to miss this one!

[www.innovationpage.com](http://www.innovationpage.com)



## Greg Hildebrandt



The Brothers Hildebrandt have played a huge part in defining modern fantasy and sci-fi art, with

work for Lucasfilm, Marvel and many others. Earlier this year, Tim Hildebrandt sadly passed away, and ImagineFX wanted to pay tribute to him and his amazing talent. Turn to page 52 for our in-depth feature and interview with Greg Hildebrandt.

[www.brothershildebrandt.com](http://www.brothershildebrandt.com)



## Viktor Titov



Russian artist Viktor Titov has a fascination with hamsters - and painting beautiful digital art. The

young artist's grasp of tone and colour reminds us of Todd Lockwood's treatments - not a bad compliment! Read all about his life and work so far in our Artist Portfolio interview on page 58, and then discover his techniques on page 94...

[hamsterfly.cgsociety.org](http://hamsterfly.cgsociety.org)



## Kuang Hong



By popular demand, Kuang Hong (aka Noah) joins the ImagineFX panel of experts this

month, sharing his secrets and answering your digital art questions. Find out how the artist goes about colouring an image without adding too many different colours, and how to master using a Hard edged brush in Photoshop on page 38.

[www.zemotion.net](http://www.zemotion.net)



# Welcome... double the fun



This month, you may notice we've got two very different covers. The idea of a split personality, or human and alien issue came to us when exploring the idea of character concepts for the movies (by the way, check out Hollywood artist Neville Page's awesome workshop starting on page 74). It was only a matter of time before

we asked the incredibly talented John Kearney to take up the challenge. Flip back to page 3 and find out more about John's working process. And remember to collect both covers (whether you're human or alien).

Elsewhere this issue, we interview Anthony S. Waters (page 44) and find out how he creates striking and original images for WotC, Microsoft and other big clients (workshop on page 68).

We've also got something extremely useful for you on the DVD – five rotatable nude figure poses. You don't even have to leave the house to brush up on your life drawing skills! Check out the second instalment of Joel Carlo's life-drawing masterclass on page 98. Until next time...

*Rob*  
Rob Carney, Editor  
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## Tell us what you think!

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## Five things...

you'll find in this  
issue of ImagineFX

**1 Epic battles**  
Use ArtRage and Photoshop to  
create dynamic battle scenes  
with Viktor Titov **Page 94**

**2 Art theft**  
Find out how to protect yourself  
from digital thieves – this is info  
you need to know! **Page 22**

**3 Figure it out!**  
Joel Carlo teaches you the basics  
of figure drawing. There's also  
five free rotatable poses on your DVD!  
**Page 98**

**4 Lucrezia Navarre**  
Henning Ludvigsen chats to  
German digital artist Benita  
Winckler about her latest, and possibly  
greatest, painting. **Page 80**



**5 Art-Venture**  
Join our hero as he escapes orcs,  
and leaps into a new world in  
the second instalment of Lee Carter's  
Art-Venture – our exclusive comic strip.  
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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

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TURN  
FOR  
MORE

"As an artist, what do you do when you feel like painting a gargantuan battle scene?"

Viktor Titov (page 94)

Image: Viktor Titov



**YOU!**

Want to be  
our artist of  
the month?  
Turn to  
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## Artist GALLERIES

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"I aim to create images that engage on some emotional level"

Anthony S. Waters (page 44)



# Reader EXPOSE

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX  
ARTIST  
MONTH

## Peter Mohrbacher

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS



Peter has been drawing for about seven years and painting only four years, "But since I started, I feel like I've been out

adventuring in the wilderness of the creative field."

It's not always enjoyable, though. "Howls of self-doubt linger in the distance," he muses. "Shrouding fog is always concealing my path." Peter is just glad to have his friends and family to keep pushing him forward.

"When I get lost on a piece or if I start to look away from my art I just look back inside myself and try to remember why I started to do all this." Peter treasures his imagination above all: "I don't really like things like sci-fi or fantasy as much as I like the things I see in my head when I stare out of the passenger seat window of a car."

**1 AZRAEL** "This is the angel of death," explains Peter. The 11th from a series of 12 angels: "I wanted to create something that was identifiable as death without making him a cliché."

**2 ANATHEMA** This is a glorification of Peter's favourite villain character. "An experimentation for both symbolism and surrealism for me," he explains.



## ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Peter Mohrbacher wins a copy of Painter, featuring the world's best Corel Painter art, and Exposé 4, showcasing the universe's finest digital artists. Find out more at: [www.ballisticpublishing.com](http://www.ballisticpublishing.com).











2

**Craig Musselman**

**LOCATION:** Canada

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**SOFTWARE:** Photoshop



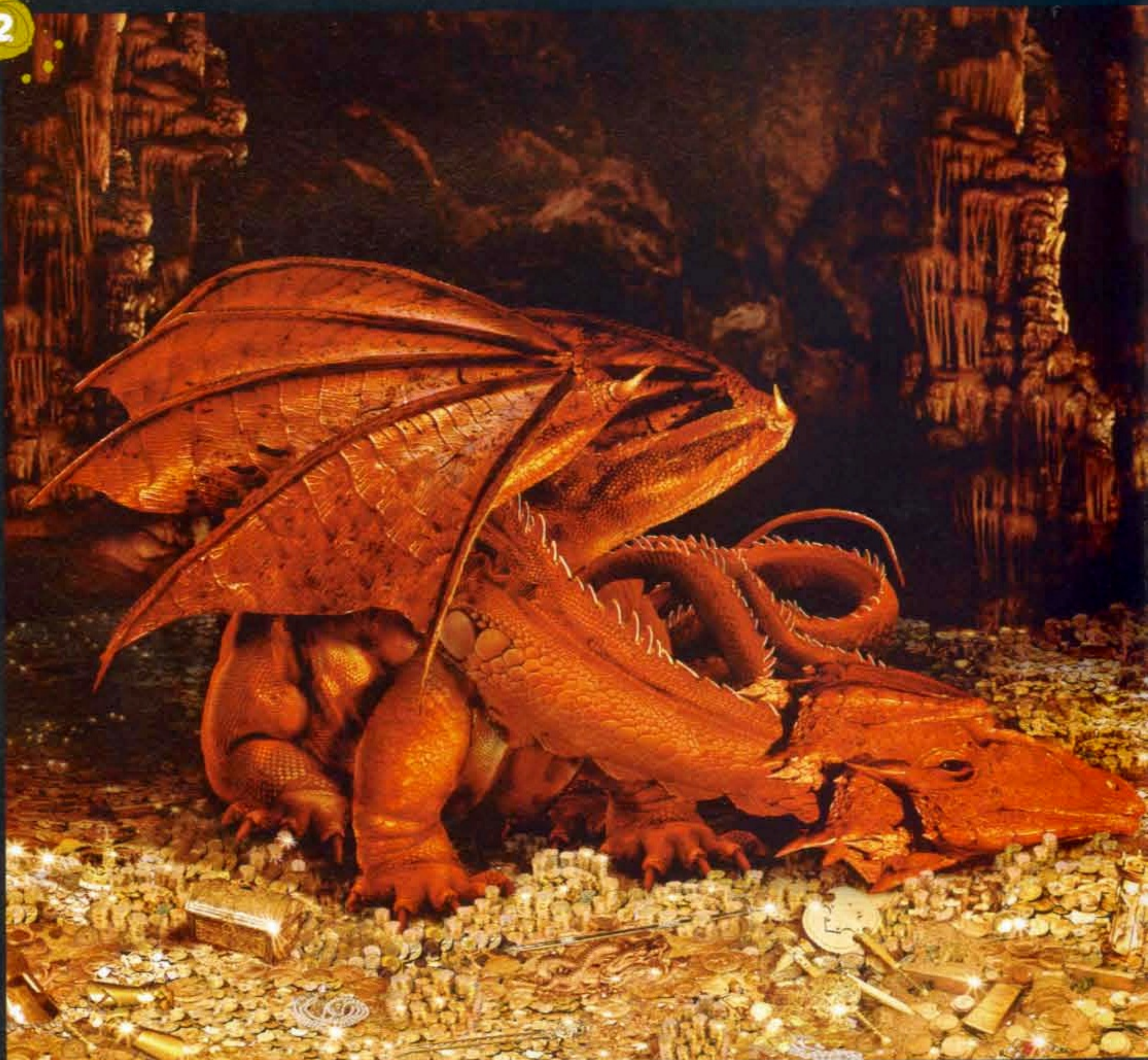
Craig has always been good at developing his skills: "Childhood arts and crafts have progressed smoothly to sophisticated models, costumes, paintings and digital images," he explains.

His love of fantasy has always been there too. "Whether it be medieval dragons and armour, or the far future of the world of technology," he opines. Not surprisingly then, he's torn between technology and lore: "So I completed a university degree in physics, then followed it up with a digital art program to balance both halves of my mind."

Having discovered Photoshop many years ago, Craig was immediately convinced: "I've found the ultimate tool to give form to the dreams that pour forth from my imagination."

**1 LANDING PLATFORM** The concept here was epic: "A futuristic city with flying personal transports and sky access on buildings in some darker world of the future," Craig reveals.

**2 RED DRAGON** From several reptiles sprang forth this image. "It shows an adult red dragon enjoying his vast horde of golden treasure," says Craig.







1

## **Jason Springer**

**LOCATION:** US

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**SOFTWARE:** Photoshop, Illustrator



Jason graduated with a degree in industrial design, originally majoring in special FX make-up but: "After school I started working for a sporting goods website. There I had enough free time to learn Photoshop and discovered deviantART."

Jason learned from online tutorials and taught himself the rest, so now his goal is clear: "I'm looking to get into any art field that will enable me to draw and create characters, the comic book industry, fantasy art or game design for example."

Simulating a production environment, Jason sets himself tight deadlines: "I have strong work ethics and apply them to every aspect of my art. He's hoping to start taking commission work on his own site in the near future."

**1 KARUSH VS COLE** A true example of David vs Goliath. "I spent roughly two weeks working on this one," says Jason. "I really felt like I finally captured my style in this picture."



2



3

**2 THE RISING** "This is the main antagonist in my little world," smiles Jason with pride. "Here he is awakening from the dead after about a hundred years. He's one bad dude."

**3 LOS MUERTES** While trying to become a freelance artist Jason has been practising different ways of colouring. "Here I just took a roughed out pencil drawing, scanned it and added colour. I like the feeling you get with the pencils, it's more of an emotional style."



**Dawood Marion**

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS2



"I just found out about digital painting through the internet last year," says Dawood, who until then completed his work with a combination of watercolour and pencil. "I've always dreamed of creating an epic production of totally original characters and worlds." His discovery brings that dream closer.

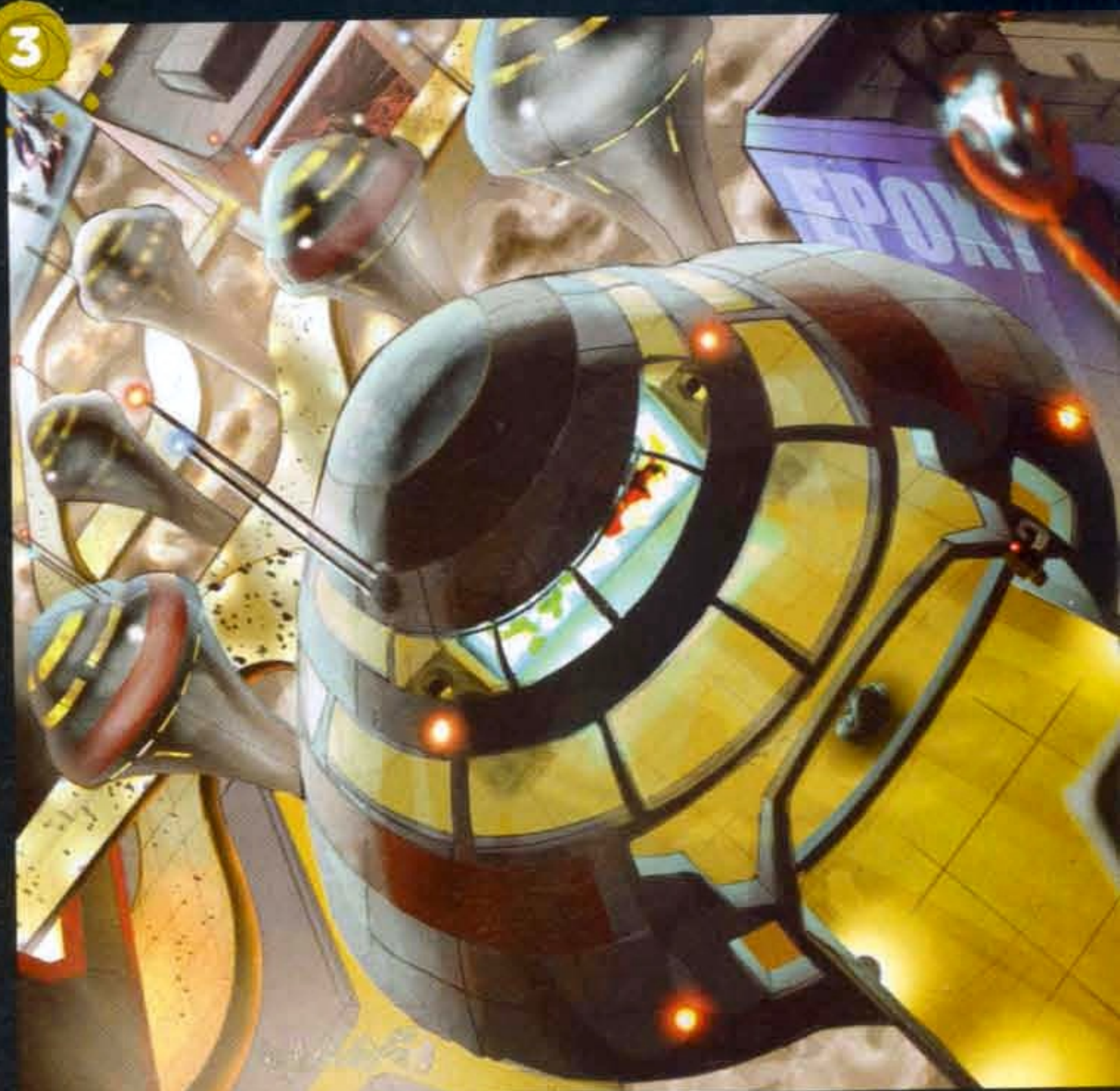
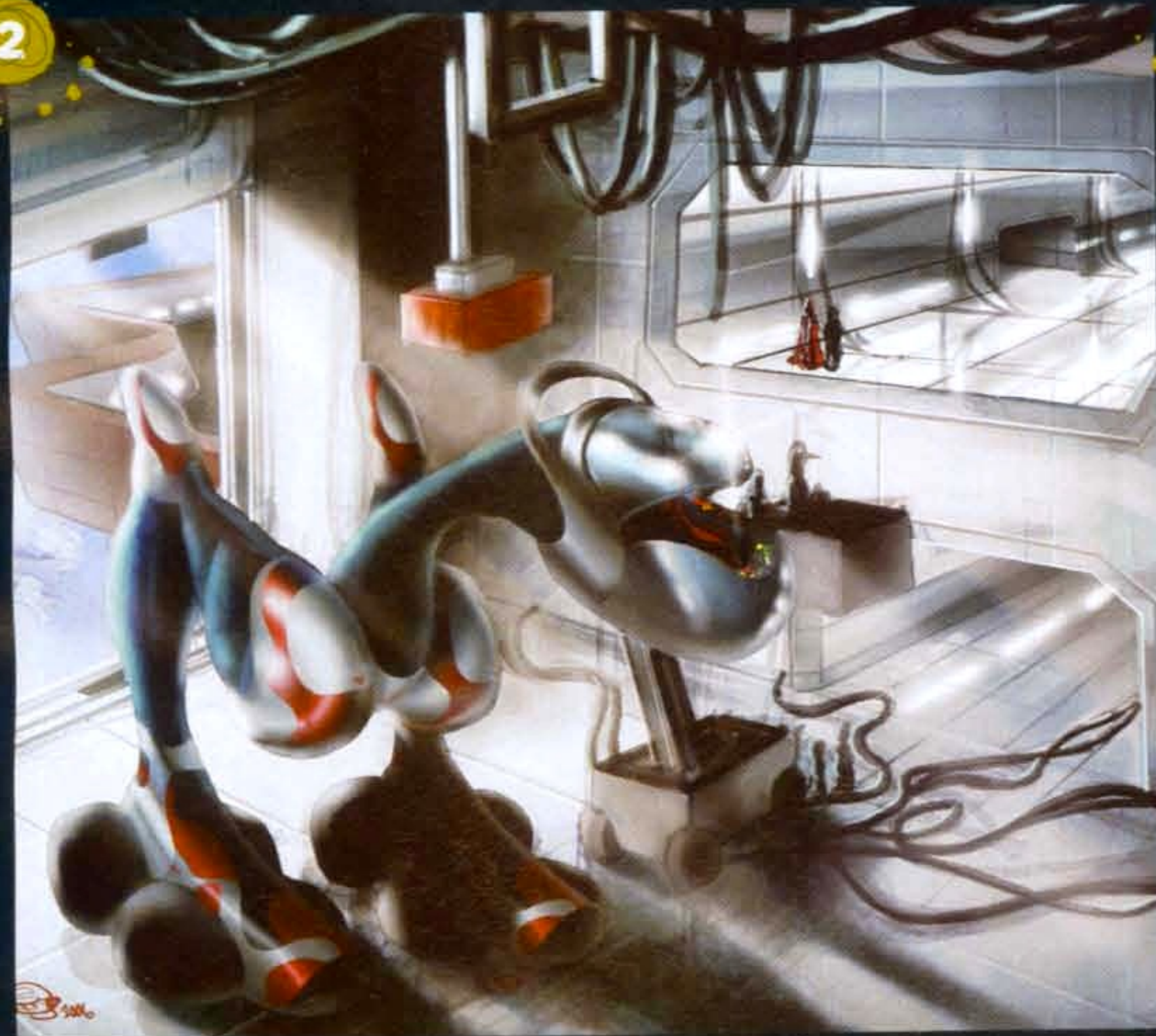
Dawood is working on a graphic novel: "It's the first story I've ever written," he reveals. As with all beginnings, this is not a particularly quick process. "Sometimes I draw the same character thousands of times before I say 'That's it.'"

But perseverance has its rewards: "A wise man told me that to make something work you have to take risks - you have to go into an area you're not sure you can handle."

**1 EPOXY WORLD** This image was originally drawn in 1994. "It was a quick ink sketch on news print. This has been through a lot to finally end up as a Photoshop piece," states Dawood.

**2 DULLA** This image was created for Dawood's graphic novel. "I have an archive of characters that I created over ten years ago. Dulla, the creature, is one of those old characters."

**3 FIND HIM** This exercise in perspective evolved gradually. "After a while it seemed dead so I added the trooper on the right to give it action," says Dawood.







1

2



### **Duncan Gutteridge**

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**SOFTWARE:** Photoshop CS with a little bit of Painter



Duncan grew up admiring the works of Frank Frazetta and HR Giger: "And I have always felt an affinity with the organic forms of Art Nouveau and the flowing curves of Alphonse Mucha's poster art."

After studying illustration at college Duncan has worked in many areas, from advertising to editorial and publishing work, but until recently hasn't been able to fully indulge his love of fantasy.

"My first love has always been the fantasy female form," says the artist. "And since I've only been working digitally for 18 months, most of my work is in traditional media." Duncan plans to develop his skills with a view to entering the game industry.

**1 FOREST NYMPH** Duncan outlines his technique on this one: "The figure was drawn in pencil and realised in Photoshop with parts of the background as montage and parts painted directly in Photoshop."

**2 FAERIE GIFT** Developed from an original pencil drawing: "The faerie hides her gift of rotten food as legend would have it... the apple being disguised by the 'faerie glamour'!"



1



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**Justin Kellis**

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Justin has been in love with SF and Fantasy art for ever: "I would spend hours staring at cover art in bookstores, dreaming of one day seeing my own work on the cover of books and magazines," he muses.

Since then he's worked to make that dream a reality. "Ten years ago I got Photoshop installed and since then my art technique and ability has exploded!"

Photoshop has enabled Justin to find his creative potential. "I work as a graphic artist in New York City by day, and by night I paint... still dreaming of that book cover with my name on it."

**1 SANJO-BASHI** Inspired by a trip to Kyoto: "A lone traveller walks across Kyoto's Sanjobashi bridge in the dark of night, but she is not alone!"

**2 THE TURNING POINT** Poor mermaid. She finds herself on the floor, free from her watery prison; but are these men her liberators or her captors?"

**3 ALIEN AMBUSH** "It's always handy to carry a plasma sword, as you never know what might pop out from the mists around you," opines Justin.



1

**Neil Blevins**

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**SOFTWARE:** 3ds max and Photoshop



"I've been making fantasy/sci-fi artwork for as long as I can remember," says Neil. "First with paper and pencil, then with acrylics,"

and now on the computer using a hybrid 2D/3D approach.

Neil has mixed feelings about the precision you can get from 3D software: "So I manipulate my images with layers of dirt and grime in Photoshop and other software to get a more organic feeling."

The immediacy of painting as opposed to 3D work is also attractive: "It takes so long to make a pure 3D image that much of the time you lose that original inspiration along the way." Neil is always pushing his technique to help him hold onto that original spark.

**1 THE GATHERING 2** "The second instalment in a series of images which depict variations on a being whose purpose is to collect the dead for the next stage of life," he reveals.

**2 ALTERNATIVE BIRTH** Neil is fascinated by wires: "Especially when they relate to human flesh." This image combines both in a somewhat disturbing fashion. "The name gives it a bit of extra 'ick' factor," laughs Neil.

**3 BLOOD PLANET** A CD cover for the band Element. "They wanted the shore of a blood sea and old ruins where a giant war was once fought. I approached this piece as a matte painting, combining beach photos, a few 3D elements, and a lot of painting."



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### **Marley Mcleay**

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**SOFTWARE:** Photoshop 7



Matt Jefferies' design of the Enterprise from Star Trek was the starting point for Marley. "I was four years old and have been fascinated by organic flowing lines that the Enterprise had, ever since," he recalls.

In 1999 Marley was introduced to Photoshop and his art expanded, from its graphite origins into colour and depth.

By the time he was 13, Marley knew art would be something significant for him. "I was in my mid 20s when I realised that I would like to be a matte painter and I hope I'll be able to achieve this ambition in the near future."

**1 THE OVERSEER** Marley is willing to admit that not all of his pieces go to plan. "There are times where I just go on pure intuition and see where I end up," he reveals.

**2 BECKONED** "A gentle creature glides gracefully high above the clouds, its shape so vast its shadow turns day into night. A shaman performs a ritual chant, to commune with the dragon."

**3 SURVIVOR** "This was really challenging to finish," says Marley. "The technique I refined through the years and had started to hone for another painting of mine called Thysan Bay is now starting to feel old."



3







1

## 🇸🇪 Mats Minnhagen

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter



Before getting into digital, Mats had struggled for years with traditional media. "Then late one night I stumbled into the gallery of Craig Mullins and realised what could be achieved with a computer. I instantly decided to switch media," he says.

A big fan of both the stylised form of comic art, and the loose look of impressionistic painting: "In my own work I often strive to unite both qualities in the same images."

Mats is currently working as a freelance illustrator, doing book covers, RPG illustrations and many other things.

**1 GUARDIAN MECHA** Mats envisioned "A strange robot with shields that would be a beetle-like armour when folded together on the back and spider-like legs when unfolded."

**2 THE LAST BATTLE** In this scene - reflecting the force of two armies crashing into each other - Mats wanted to add "A dream-like quality, almost like a vision."

**3 ODE TO THE GAMER** "A cliché hero on a mission in a magical world," says Mats. This painting started out as a sort of tribute to Mats' old RPG days: "But evolved to become more a story about a mysterious old tree."



2



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**Jim Pavelec**

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop 7/Painter 1X



After working exclusively in oils for a decade, Jim decided to try out the digital world.

Explaining his hybrid technique he says: "I lay out some rough colours using acrylic based inks that I allow to flow into each other randomly then I scan this in and drop my drawing on top in a multiply layer in Photoshop 7."

Once fully digital, Jim can work the image up to its final full glory, experimenting as he goes. "The malleability of the digital medium makes it ideal for illustrators," he says, highlighting this aspect of the process.

**1 OLIVE SKINNED IN COBALT FUR**

"This piece was done for Kevin Eastman at Heavy Metal Magazine, one of my earliest influences," says Jim; "It was an honour to work for someone who had such a huge influence on me as a young artist."

**2 MASTERS OF WAR** "This piece just won runner up for best action piece in the New Masters of Fantasy Volume III," boasts Jim.

**3 WERESPIDER** Using a live model for the human portion of this piece really helped Jim achieve the look he wanted. "Taking photos of spider webs and closely researching spiders brought it all together," he says.





1

## Phil Barnard

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**SOFTWARE:** Painter, Photoshop, Sketchbook Pro



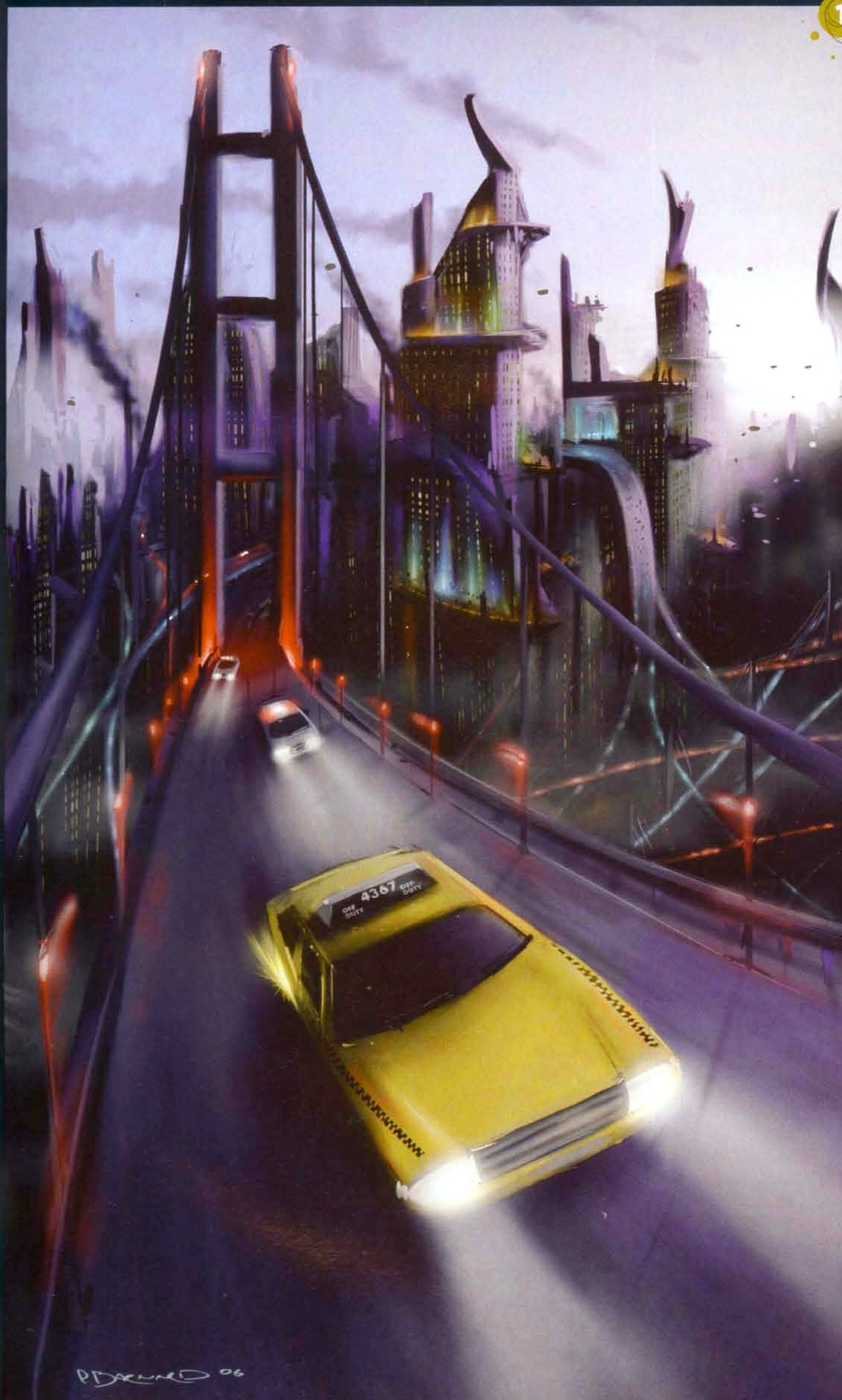
Phil's love of films like Star Wars and Lord of the Rings have been a big inspiration for his art. In fact: "I first got into concept design

after visiting The Art of Star Wars exhibition about three years ago."

Phil was fascinated by the work of Doug Chiang. "As soon as I got home from the exhibition I was drawing spaceships. I bought my first graphics tablet just over a year ago and now 90 per cent of my work is done digitally."

After finishing college six months ago Phil's concentrating on his artwork and looking for that all-important opening in the industry.

**1 POLICE CHASE** A personal sketch painting. Phil explains: "I'm focusing on the general mood of the city and trying to add a feeling of movement to the chase."



## SEND US YOUR ARTWORK!

Want to see your digital art grace these very pages? Send your work to us, along with an explanation of your techniques, the title of each piece of art, a photo of yourself and your contact details. Images should be sent as 300 DPI TIFF or JPEG files, on CD or DVD. All artwork is submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically.

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ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

# ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE FANTASY ART COMMUNITY







## LOCKWOOD

ImagineFX columnist Todd Lockwood explains that just like a Hollywood blockbuster film, every digital painting needs to have a star to make it work. Find out more...

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## STAR WARS POSER ART

Dark Horse comic artist Jan Duursema reveals how she went from digital novice to creating the latest Star Wars: Legacy comic cover with Poser.

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## ANIME MAGIC

Details of two exciting new releases from anime's brightest new talent Makoto Shinkai, the award winning director of Voices of a Distant Star. See the latest pics...

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# It's a steal

**Protect your art** Digital art theft is more common than you think – but what are the dangers, and how can you best protect against it?

Art theft can take many forms. At its simplest, it may be a case of an image looking similar to an existing work of art. Subconsciously or otherwise, all artists borrow from other artists, and sometimes it may just be a case of accidental imitation or even homage, rather than malicious intent.

More serious are the cases of images lifted verbatim from artists' portfolios and passed off as an original. And at the most extreme end, people may even be selling others' artwork as their own. Cases such as this are rare, because once money enters the equation, it's easier to establish a real legal case.

Daniel Sowers, Director of Copyright and Policy Enforcement at DeviantArt, comments: "Among the worst cases are those in which someone has removed a signature or other identifying information from an image, and in the most extreme example of this we've had to remove people who were attempting to impersonate other artists, although this is rare."

It's difficult to determine how many incidents of digital art theft are reported each year, let alone those that are successfully proven and/or prosecuted. "Unfortunately the internet tends to foster a culture of denial and excuse when it comes to the subject of image theft," says Daniel. He adds that DeviantArt tries to cultivate an atmosphere of respect for other people's work to create a more self-regulating community, "but even with these efforts, we log approximately 75,000 reports of unauthorised use each year on our internal reporting system." That's a lot of 'accidental' imitation.

If you suspect someone is copying your art – on whatever scale – it's important to approach the matter calmly and professionally.

All of the large online community galleries – including DeviantArt, Renderosity, GFXArtist and CGSociety – include some method to report suspected art theft. Use these in the first instance, and in most cases, the offending artwork will simply be removed and the member likely banned, providing you can prove your claim.

In more serious cases, such as re-selling artwork, it's down to ➡

“If you suspect someone is copying your art, it's important to approach the matter calmly”



Large community galleries such as DeviantArt and GFXArtist have well-established procedures for reporting art theft.

## INDUSTRY INSIDER

### JENIFER CAREY

*Jenifer Carey, Admin and Copyright Agent for Renderosity, discusses digital art theft*

#### How prevalent is image theft in Renderosity's experience?

Image theft within the Renderosity community is rather low. I think that is because most members at Renderosity are artists who know copyright laws and respect other artists' works.

#### Does Renderosity have any legal powers in cases such as these?

Renderosity has very limited legal powers when it comes copyright issues since Renderosity is not the copyright holder. However, Renderosity is occasionally asked to act on behalf of an artist to help get their works removed from sites that are displaying or distributing them without permission – we've had high success rates at getting copyright violations and item being illegally distributed removed.

#### How can artists best guard against these dangers?

Unfortunately, there is not a foolproof way to avoid theft if someone really wants to steal it. Many people who violate someone's copyright do not realise what they are doing is wrong, because they are new to a hobby or have been told by someone else (not the copyright holder) that it's okay to use. Copyright education is the key to help reduce copyright infringements.



*Jenifer Carey works for Renderosity, a thriving online community for digital artists of all abilities*

[www.renderosity.com](http://www.renderosity.com)

Illustration by Dave Curd,  
[www.davecurd.com](http://www.davecurd.com)



➔ Continued from previous page...



To protect your images, you can always use watermarking safeguards such as DigiMarc.

you to seek legal advice. It's unlikely that a hosting gallery will be able to help you here, as Daniel points out: "Unfortunately, we are unable to act legally on behalf of our members. Although we do lend a bit of weight in cases involving large scale infringements, our role is pretty much limited to providing advice and support."

Of course, the best cure is prevention, and there are many ways to ensure your artwork is immediately identifiable. The most obvious is to sign it, usually in a position or manner which makes it hard to remove (especially if it's difficult to spot in the first place).

A copyright credit ("Copyright 2006 your name here") can also work wonders. Remember that anything you create is automatically copyrighted to you and therefore cannot be used without your permission - you don't have to go to any special steps to secure this. Adding a visual reminder may deter casual copying, just as an automatic house light can deter burglars.

"There are also various services that provide digital watermarking, which is difficult to defeat, as well as imbed a tracking capability that can monitor and report where your images are being used," adds Daniel. One such is DigiMarc ([www.digimarc.com](http://www.digimarc.com)), which claims to be able to survive repeated generations of copies.

Finally, for major works you should register your copyright with the appropriate authority: The Patent Office in the UK ([www.patent.gov.uk](http://www.patent.gov.uk)) or the US Copyright Office ([www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov)). ●

## Virtual threads

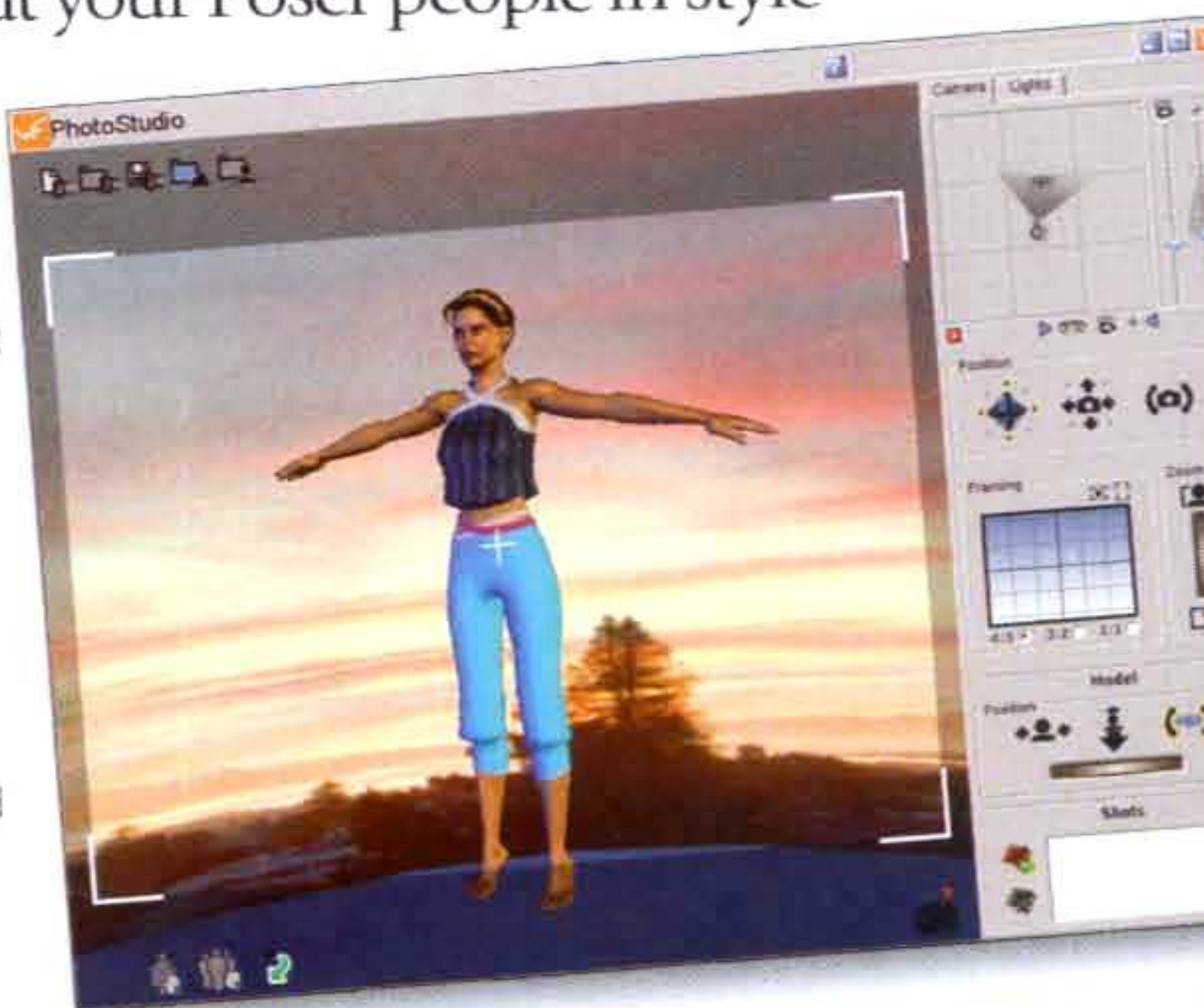
Glad rags Deck out your Poser people in style

e-frontier has unveiled a new clothing product for its ever-popular Poser program, Virtual Fashion. Rather than just a collection of bespoke outfits, the app enables you to create your own dynamic garments.

Virtual Fashion started life as a high-end cloth simulation plug-in called ClothReyes and was used to design clothes for the likes of Gucci and Prada. Now e-frontier has simplified the interface, presenting a wizard-like walkthrough.

First you design your garment, then decide on a choice of 11 fabrics such as silk, denim or cotton (or create your own). You can also create customised versions of the same basic garment and assign them to particular groups, such as by season.

You then move to the FittingRoom to place the garment onto the figure and export it to Poser itself. Because Virtual Fashion includes true cloth simulation, the clothing automatically 'drapes' itself over any pose in a realistic way, in real time. The program also includes make-up tools and a photo studio, to enable you to show



You can create your own clothing specifically for models such as Miki, Jessi, James and Terai Yuki



off your new creations in the best light.

"Creating clothing in CAD software is normally a complex task, but Virtual Fashion has changed that," said Laslo Vespreni of e-frontier. DC Comic artist Daniel Scott Gabriel Murray added "This software is great for quickly making unique custom clothing. I can now easily make boots or clothing for my Ghost character."

Virtual Fashion Basic is available for Windows as a download, priced £51. See [www.e-frontier.com](http://www.e-frontier.com) for more.

## Corel goes to bits

Software latest New system promises a bolt-on approach

Corel, publishers of Painter among other graphics packages, has announced "a new modular digital imaging platform" with the codename Alta. This aims to combine the speed and power of traditional desktop applications with the flexibility of web-based ones.

The first part of Alta will be available as a free download from Corel in the autumn, and will feature tools for enhancing, organising and sharing photos, videos and other images. "With [Alta], customers have easier access to their Corel software applications at any time and from



anywhere," said Corel's CEO David Dobson.

The "modular" aspect describes the way you can then download extra

components to add more gadgets as and when you need them. Other developers can also release Alta tools and add their own online communities to the software.

For more, see [www.corel.com](http://www.corel.com).



This month  
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART  
**ImagineFX**  
likes...

**Artist Q&A** - advice from the best digital artists in the business  
See page 36

**Legends** - truly iconic art from The Brothers Hildebrandt  
See page 52

**Character art** - Hollywood artist Neville Page joins ImagineFX  
See page 74

**Figure drawing** - five free rotatable poses on your DVD  
See page 66 & 98

**John Kearney** - this month's fantastic cover artist  
[www.brushsize.com](http://www.brushsize.com)



Corel's flagship application Painter is well-known to many artists, and unlikely to be affected by "Alta".



# Digital Darth

**New comic** The force is strong with Poser

Dark Horse Comics is embracing digital art ever more closely with the latest comic series set in the Star Wars universe. **Star Wars: Legacy issue #0** features a cover created in e-frontier's Poser software, showing a Sith called Darth Talon complete with tattoos.

The comic's artist is Jan Duursema, a prolific Dark Horse contributor with titles such as The Incredible Hulk, X-Men and Wonder Woman to her name. "Digital art is actually something totally new to me," she told ImagineFX, adding that normally she uses pencil. "When I found out I would be working on Star Wars Legacy I began to wonder how I would be able to



create turnarounds on buildings, weapons, and such. I had been dabbling with Poser for about a year and it occurred to me that I could create the models using it."

At first Jan was stumped as to how to create the Sith's tattoos, originally painting them on in Photoshop. But, she explains "the first time I saw the tattooed skin I created wrapped around the model, I knew I had to try to do a cover using the program."

Star Wars: Legacy is available now. For more, see [www.darkhorse.com/profile/profile.php?sku=13-514](http://www.darkhorse.com/profile/profile.php?sku=13-514).



The Sith Darth Talon, created in Poser by Jan Duursema for the cover of the new Star Wars comic, Star Wars: Legacy.

Image: © 2006 Lucasfilm Ltd. &™. All rights reserved.

## Fan Art

# Can you conceive it?

## Blizzard holds first official fan art contest

Blizzard has announced its first ever annual Fan Art Contest for both 2D and 3D concept artists. The idea is to create your own visualisations for any one of three of the company's best-selling computer game series: the all-conquering Warcraft, Diablo or StarCraft.

There's a separate category for the best cinematics art.

Anyone can enter, professional or amateur, in any medium, and both character and world or architectural designs are eligible. As you'd expect from such a huge company, the prizes are substantial. Each Grand Prize winner (one per category) will be treated to a two-day trip to Los Angeles and lunch or dinner with the Blizzard art team – a fanboy's dream, and an invaluable chance to pick up some tips.

Also included is a Wacom Cintiq display tablet, a top-end Alienware Area-51 7500 PC, a framed and signed print of Blizzard artwork, plus a \$220 gift certificate for Blizzard's online store. That little lot totals more than \$10,000. There are also 14 runners-up prize packages of \$1,000 cash, a \$220 gift certificate, and a signed Blizzard print.

The competition opened on 31 July and runs until 17 September. You must be 18 or over to enter (21 in the US). For full details visit [www.blizzard.com](http://www.blizzard.com).



Some of the goodies on offer for the Grand Prizes: a Wacom Cintiq tablet plus an Alienware PC.

# Greenscreen goliath

**Hidden talent** Special effects maestro discovers the lure of digital art

Rob Benevides has been a special effects make-up artist for the past 20 years, which gives a touch



of the fantastic to many of his images. His latest project is called Las Guerreras, depicting various female warriors

throughout the ages, based on legends and other stories.

As a "frustrated film maker at heart" he only got into photography two years ago, and generally uses Photoshop, plus a mixture of plug-ins from Digital Anarchy to create his multilayered effects.

Rob shoots on a high-end Canon digital SLR camera and uses movie lights for his subjects, which are mainly placed against a greenscreen and then composited with anything up to 50 layers.

"I try to keep retouching to a minimum in my imagery," he adds. "I really want to keep the final composites as photography-based

as I can." And now, inspired by ImagineFX and "the incredibly talented artists you feature", he has started drawing from scratch in Photoshop, "so thanks for helping me to discover a new talent!"

To see Rob's work visit <http://s35.photobucket.com/albums/d191/benefex> and [www.digitalanarchy.com/primatte/gallery\\_robBenevides.html](http://www.digitalanarchy.com/primatte/gallery_robBenevides.html).



Two images from Rob Benevides' Las Guerreras project. The images are created by shooting actors against a greenscreen and then compositing the shots in Photoshop.



The Warcraft, Diablo and StarCraft universes are renowned for their distinctive designs – can you do better?



## OPINION THE STAR OF THE PAINTING

*Like any good Hollywood blockbuster, every successful painting has one brightest Star*

By Todd Lockwood

Your painting is a story, a visual instant conveying circumstances. It has something to say, and identifying the Star can help you tell the tale. You have to know from inception who or what the single most important thing in the painting is. Usually it's a figure, but it can be almost anything – an object, location, colour, shape, texture – even an emotion. When you know that, everything else will fall into place readily.

Contrast is the most important Star identifier. Place the greatest contrast of value, colour, texture, scale, detail, angular movement, and polish on or near your Star, and it will gain importance. The one red apple in a bowl full of green apples will be the star. One red apple in a bowl full of worms even more so! At the same time, every gradation of size or value should also lead you to, through, or past the Star. If the area surrounding the Star is more detailed than the periphery of the painting, the eye will be drawn there.

There can be co-stars as well. The same rules can be used to enhance them, as are used to make the Star pop (no pun intended), though you will want to pull back. There can be only one getting the most attention, only one in the spotlight.

That's the Star.



"Do you agree with me? Write in and tell me by sending an email to [todd@imaginefx.com](mailto:todd@imaginefx.com)"

See more at [www.toddlockwood.com](http://www.toddlockwood.com)

## d'Artiste: Character Modeling 2

**Your art** A call for entries, 3D character style

Fancy being featured in one of Ballistic Publishing's forthcoming books? The renowned art publisher is now taking submissions for **d'artiste: Character Modeling 2**, due later this year. The theme is **digitally-created 3D characters, either as personal work or commercially-developed figures, with the best showcased in the book for the world to see.**

Character Modeling 2 features three leading artists in the field – Aaron Sims, Meats Meier and Timur "Taron" Baysal – who demonstrate their techniques for character modelling in 3D at a professional level. Topics include face modelling, skin shading, facial hair and body modelling, along with a host of illustrations and sketches.

Aaron and Timur have both worked in Hollywood as art directors and designers for various leading films, while Meats Meier is well-known for his training DVDs through The Gnomon Workshop. If your work is good enough, it could be featured alongside theirs in the gallery section of the book.

Entry is free and you can submit as many images as you like, but you'll need to get a move on – the deadline is Monday 21 August. For more information and to submit your entry, follow the links at [www.ballisticpublishing.com](http://www.ballisticpublishing.com).



Worldwide fame awaits... if your artwork makes the grade for Ballistic Publishing's latest book.

## Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

**"We asked the art director at the ad agency who the guy in the helmet was. He shrugged and said, 'The man in the iron mask.'"**

Find out which icon of cinema wasn't recognised in our Brothers Hildebrandt Legends feature on page 52

## Amapi's new home

**3D modeller** Poser publisher snaps up 3D package

It's been a busy month for e-frontier, what with launching one new product and acquiring another. The company has bought out the 3D CAD modelling software called Amapi from Eovia Europe, to add to its current suite of graphics software including the ubiquitous Poser, Shade and Manga Studio.

"Amapi is a great addition to our product line and furthers the company's goal to be a leader in the graphics community," said e-frontier's CEO Hiroshi Sato. Amapi was the last product being developed under the Eovia name, following DAZ Productions' acquisition of Carrara and Hexagon earlier this year.

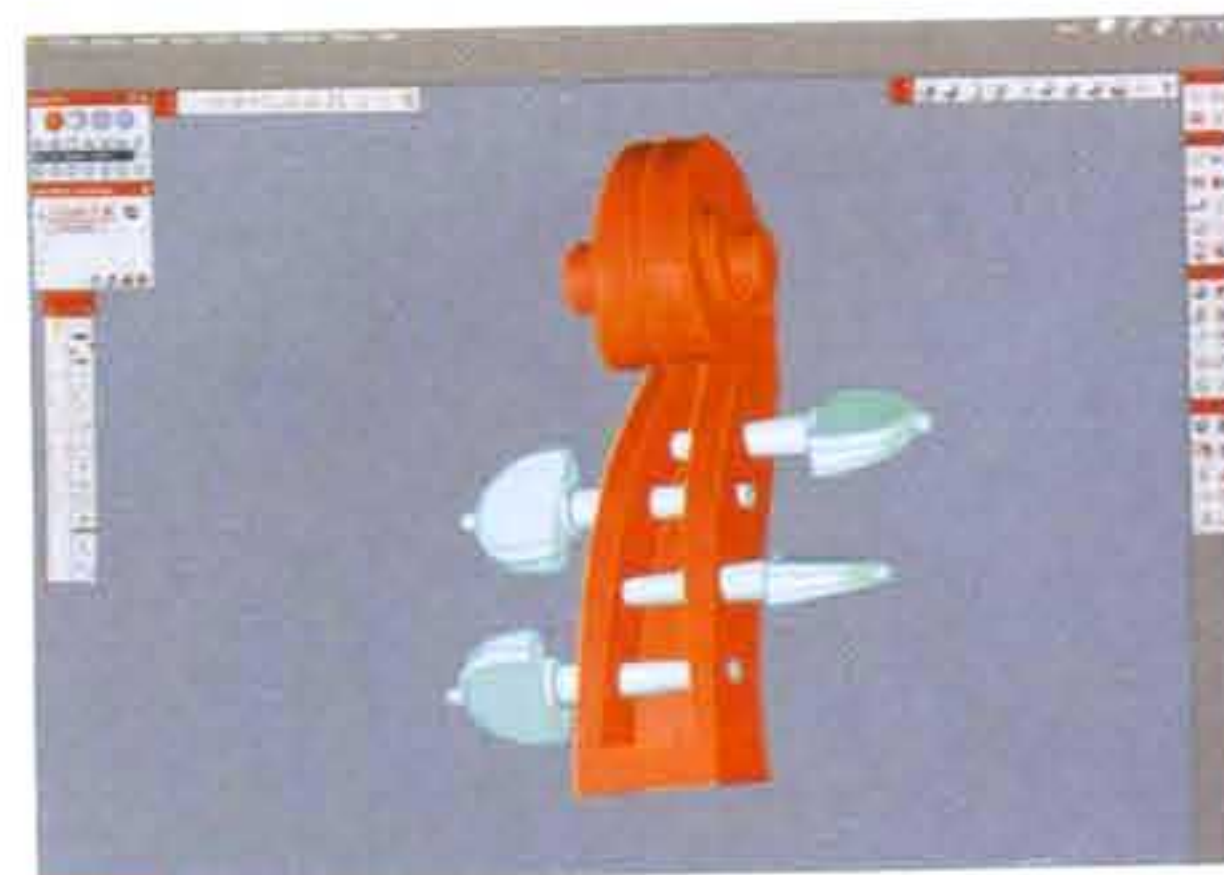
But what could this mean to you as an artist? Well, initially, not very

much. Amapi is a relatively complex and high-end NURBS modelling application known for its distinctive interface, and doesn't look to fit into e-frontier's line-up.

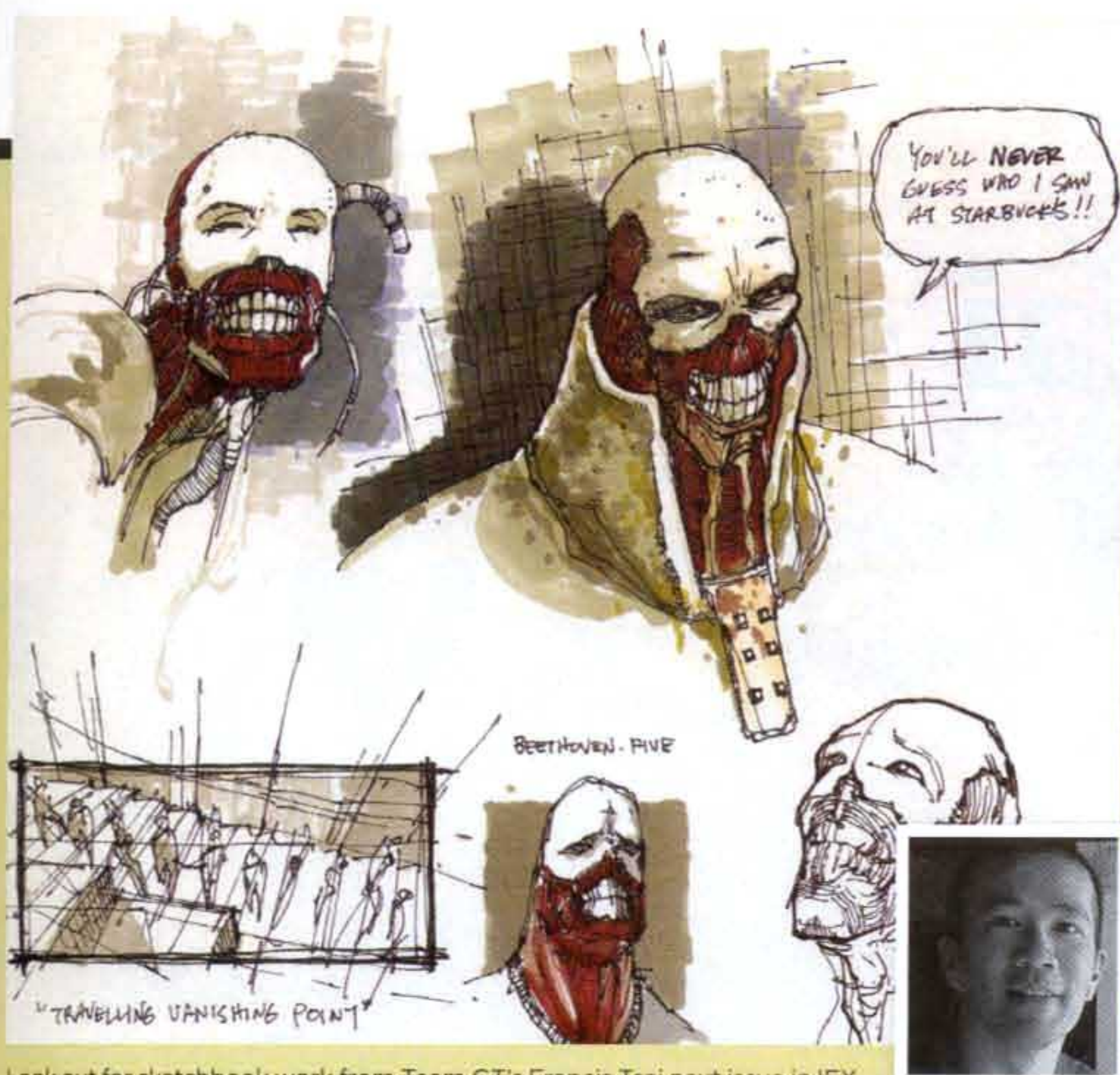
But, the company has told us that it will continue to develop the program, so there may be a possibility of it also producing a friendlier, lower-end version, which could be more easily incorporated with the likes of Poser. Watch this space for more information and make sure to keep a beady eye on [www.e-frontier.com](http://www.e-frontier.com) too.



Amapi doesn't fit in the usual e-frontier line-up, but it may be adapted at a future date.







Look out for sketchbook work from Team GT's Francis Tsai next issue in IFX.

## FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART **ImagineFX Sketchbooks**

**Coming soon** New series shows you the work in progress of established and up-and-coming artists

Next month, due to popular demand, we begin a new series entitled **Sketchbooks**. This is your chance to show the world how you start your artwork, and similarly, find out how your peers' sketchbooks shape up.

The series will feature sketches, both pencil and digital, from some of your favourite digital artists, as well as up-and-coming stars of the fantasy art scene. In our recent reader survey, you told us you wanted more WIP featured in the mag, so we're giving it to you.

We're running the Sketchbook series in association with

Conceptart.org – a site set up by Andrew Jones (see next month, page 92) and Jason Manley of MassiveBlack (www.massiveblack.com) to help artists gain skills, inspiration and advice from their contemporaries. It's a thriving forum, so get yourself over there.

So here's a taster of what's to come over the following months – including early sketch work from Team GT's Francis Tsai, and Bizarre Creations' Lee Carter.

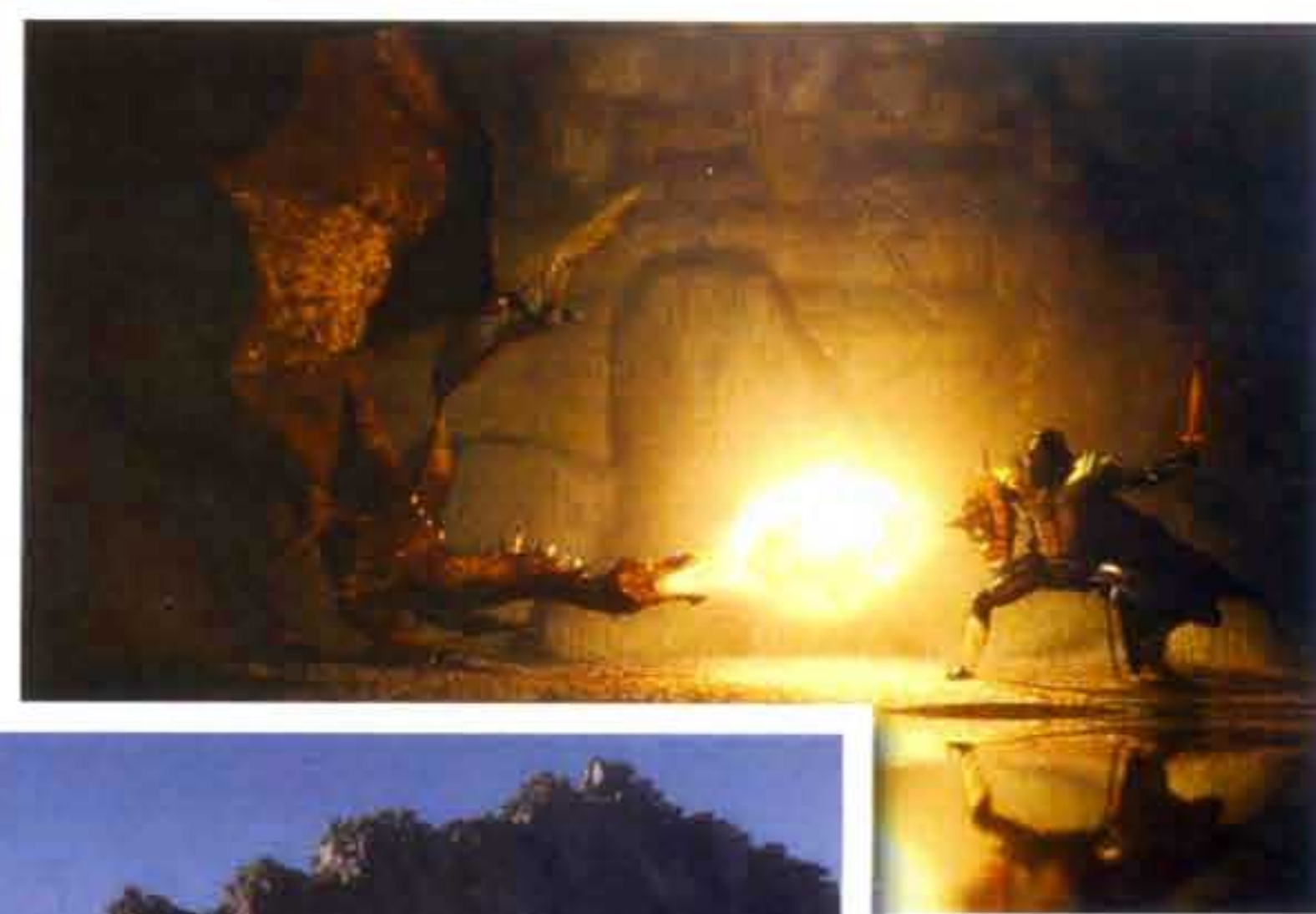
In association with:



Some examples of Lee Carter's (pictured above) sketchbook work.



©Alexander



©Michael Loh



©Eran Dinur



©Robert Czarny

# Vue 5

**Solutions for Natural 3D Environments**

"With Vue in our toolkit, we can push our work to the next level of organic environments!"

Susumu Yukuhiro - Digital Matte Supervisor at ILM

The Vue product line offers solutions from £56 to £411



For more information  
[www.e-onsoftware.com/if5](http://www.e-onsoftware.com/if5)

©Claude Destribats





## In short...

Software and hardware news for digital artists

### Plug-in PhotoFrame Pro 3

The latest update of this border and edge effect plug-in for Photoshop sports several thousand new frame styles and some new features. The Frame Browser makes choosing frames much easier, while a frame preview shows a filter's effect in real time. PhotoFrame Pro 3 is available for both Mac and PC, priced at \$159.95, or \$69.95 for an upgrade. [www.ononesoftware.com](http://www.ononesoftware.com).

### Download Texturama

**Texturama.com** offers thousands of tileable, seamless textures for use in 2D and 3D apps, and now it's launched the world's first 'Mix and Match' service, enabling you to create your own personalised bundle. Collections can include anything from one texture (\$5) to 400 (\$200) – and you can buy the whole caboodle for \$795. [www.texturama.com](http://www.texturama.com).

### Hardware Canon printers

Canon has released seven new printers – three photo models and four general-purpose ones, all in the Pixma range. The iP6700D and iP6310D photo printers are aimed at higher-level users, while the iP1700 is an entry-level version. All three can print up to 4800x1200 dpi, at a claimed time of one minute for a 4x6-inch pic. [www.canon.co.uk](http://www.canon.co.uk).

### Training Gnomon DVDs

The Gnomon Workshop has released a couple of new advanced-level DVDs: Character Modeling for Production and Character Texturing for Production, both presented by Ian Joyner. Using 3ds max, Bodypaint, Photoshop and ZBrush, he walks through the creation of a lifelike male character complete with clothing. Each DVD costs \$69. [www.thegnomonworkshop.com](http://www.thegnomonworkshop.com)

## Shinkai double

**Anime magic** Two new releases in the pipeline for Makoto Shinkai, award-winning director of *Voices of a Distant Star*

**As The Place Promised In Our Early Days gets a UK DVD release date, anime's boy wonder, Makoto Shinkai, is completing work on his latest feature Other Voices.**

Shinkai amazed audiences in 2003 with his debut feature *Voices of a Distant Star*. The cause of the amazement was three-fold: Shinkai directed, animated and produced the movie. Subtitled 'a chain of short stories about their distance', his latest offering continues to explore themes of love and distance, but dispenses with the futuristic setting in favour of a beautifully rendered modern-day Japan.

Having shrugged off the 'next Miyazaki' tag, Shinkai continues to work either alone or with a very small team, producing consistently exceptional animation. Given what he's already achieved virtually single-handed in such a short time, he's set to be one of the biggest names in anime for years to come.



Although it'll probably be some time before *Other Voices* can be heard (and seen) on these shores, the October 16 release date of *The Place Promised* is preceded by a number of theatrical screenings of Shinkai's work, notably at the NFT in August.

A high-resolution trailer of the latest movie can be found on the director's website <http://5cm.yahoo.co.jp>. Details of *The Place Promised* are available from [www.advfilms.co.uk](http://www.advfilms.co.uk).



Scenes from Makoto Shinkai's *Other Voices* (top) and *The Place Promised* (above).

## Naruto in the UK

**Terrible teen** International anime hit arrives at last

**In Japan and the US, Naruto is the biggest news since Pokemon or Dragon Ball Z. Its teenage ninja hero has spawned a thousand fan sites, and from late July UK anime fans will have a chance to see what all the fuss is about.**

Long ago, a powerful Demon Fox appeared in peaceful Konoha, the Village Hidden in the Leaves, home of the Ninja academy and large numbers of Shinobis – Ninjas.

Threatened by this evil force, the Shinobis fought long and hard to protect themselves but they just weren't up to the challenge. Then, one Shinobi, known as the Fourth Hokage, had a bright idea – sealing the spirit of the demon in the body of a newborn baby boy. That baby was Naruto Uzumaki.

The Jetix TV screenings have just started, and Manga will be releasing an uncut version of episodes 1-13 in August. Should you fall for the charms of the pesky Naruto, you're in luck – you have the next 180 episodes to look forward to while you're playing the anime-inspired game on your next-gen console.

<http://naruto.viz.com/intro.php>  
[www.manga.co.uk](http://www.manga.co.uk).



Having taken Japan and the US by storm, the *Naruto* TV series and game are bound for the UK.





# Letters

## YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Rob Carney on [rob@imaginefx.com](mailto:rob@imaginefx.com) or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK

### Hello from Johannesburg

As a 60-year-old graphic designer I have come through the ropes from Letraset and illustration markers to digital art and I must applaud your extreme effort in producing, at long last, a publication directed solely at the digital graphic arts. We have waited a long time for this type of informative approach.

I commend all the participating artists who so freely give of themselves – well done. Although I unfortunately missed issue 2, due to the fact that we receive the magazine in South Africa at least three to four weeks after it is distributed in England, I have vowed not to miss any future editions. Please continue the great work and thank you.

**Doug Hughes, Johannesburg, via email**

**Rob replies:** Thanks Doug, I'll pass this letter on to all of our artists. And to make sure you never miss an issue, why not subscribe? You'll save cash and get each issue delivered direct to your door (much earlier than you'll get it in shops). Turn to page 32 to find out how...

### Selection process?

I've been hooked since issue 1. I just wondered when you were going to announce the winners of the Reader Challenge? I didn't have time to enter, but it would be great to see the winners!

**John Davidson, via email**

**Rob replies:** Ah, we haven't forgotten, John, we just had so many entries that it took longer than we thought to sort through them all! We'll reveal the winners next issue. Look out for another Reader Challenge very soon...

### Vehicle misery

This magazine is amazing. If it was a band it would be Metallica!



### DID YOU MISS ISSUE 7?

See page 87 for details on how you can get your hands on it.

**– Subscribe and get 35% off!**



Just as I'm wondering what to do with my artistic skills, with the belief that all concept artists for video games need 3D skills (and I don't have any), ImagineFX appears as if by magic and saves the day!

This mag has everything I need to know about getting into the industry, and the info keeps on coming: weapon design, landscapes and environments... But when I read in issue 6 there was going to be an article about Vehicle Design, I rushed out on 7 July to get it. I got home all excited, and began reading... then I realised that there was no Vehicle Design. Nooo! I checked issue 6 and read the caption: 'All contents correct at time of going to press'. So I must ask, will this feature be in issue 9? Because issue 7 advertises Character Concepts in your next mag, and I really want to read about it, so I hope it's in issue 8.

After feeling a little disappointed, I hope you come up trumps again. Apart from the missing feature, (grrr!) this is the best magazine for digital artists. I wish that I had seen it when I was doing my BA in art – it would have helped me stick to the concept art. But nothing is going to stop me now. Rock on!

**Alex Philips, via email**

**Rob replies:** Thanks for your kind words, Alex. I like to think we rock as hard as Metallica. Yes, the Vehicle Design feature didn't happen as promised due to the schedules of Hollywood concept artists being a little more than hectic at this time of year. But bear with us, we have, among others, Scott Robertson on board for this ([www.drawthrough.com](http://www.drawthrough.com)) and it's going to be a cracker. And you won't want to miss our Composition tips this issue, beginning on page 82.

### Work in progress

While it's nice to see lovely finished artwork in your artist interviews, I'd really like to see some more WiP (work in progress) featured in the magazine. Can you persuade your artists to show more of their early stuff?

**Linda Thomas, via email**

**Rob replies:** Thanks for your email, Linda. While, by their very nature, we show a lot of WiP in our artist workshops, there could be scope to show more. Check out page 27 for more info on a new regular feature, rather originally called 'Sketchbooks'.



The writer of our star letter receives a copy of Vue 5 Esprit

See more at [www.e-onsoftware.com](http://www.e-onsoftware.com)

## Where have all the men gone?

I was wondering if you have given any further thought to a binder, as someone suggested previously? It would be great to be able to keep my issues safe and pristine, especially as I refer to them more than once.

Also, there is a little thing that annoys me: the DVD. Or rather the way it is sleeved in the magazine. Basically, I have to rip open the paper sleeve – and pack the DVD away elsewhere, since I cannot return it into the sleeve for fear it will fall out.

My suggestion – if you did go along with a dedicated binder for the magazine – is to put the DVD into a sleeve that can be kept in such a binder, or perhaps a nice DVD binder. Okay, so I'm a sucker for nice printed things that tell me what's in them. Trying to find Tutorial files on the right DVD could become a nightmare otherwise.

Here's my next point: I'm a girl. While I love the posters, come on you guys, let me have something I want to pin on the wall! Where are all the great images of men? Surely they're out there!

Keep up the good work!  
**Silke Juppenlatz, aka Anatis, via email**

**Rob replies:** Thanks for your letter, Silke. We're still looking into the binder idea, and I very much like the idea of an ImagineFX DVD case. What does everyone else think of the way we package DVDs?

As for the poster, from this issue onwards we're concentrating on bringing you some rather special collector's covers rather than giving away the poster every issue. This gives us the chance to give you an even better magazine every month! ●



An advertising feature in association with HarperCollins

# Shade's Children

Design a book cover for fantasy author Garth Nix's chilling vision of the future and win great prizes!

It's been three years since Garth Nix first swept into the world of UK fantasy fiction with his Old Kingdom trilogy Sabriel, Lirael and Abhorsen. The epic stories – which begin with Sabriel, a young girl who has to follow in her necromancer father's footsteps to fight the risen dead – caught the imaginations of fantasy fans and made Garth a best-selling author.

"I am constantly surprised by the response to the Old Kingdom trilogy," he says, "and one of the best things is that the books keep on finding new readers all around the world. I was particularly pleased that the books were well-received by the British audience, as of course in many ways the UK is the historical, natural home of fantasy in the English language."

Since the Old Kingdom, Garth has been writing another series of books called The Keys to the Kingdom: "While my books are published for children, I don't specifically write them for children... or for adults for that matter."

In August, he's launching SF adventure Shade's Children. It's set in a futuristic urban wasteland, where evil Overlords have decreed that no child shall live a day past his or her 14th birthday. On that Sad Birthday, the child is the object of an obscene harvest resulting in the construction of a machine-like creature whose sole purpose is to kill.

The mysterious Shade – once a man, but now more like the machines he fights – recruits the few children fortunate enough to escape. With luck, cunning and skill, four of Shade's children come closer than any to discovering the source of the Overlords'

power – and the key to their downfall. But the closer the children get, the more ruthless Shade seems to become.

"The idea for Shade's Children came to me when I discovered a disused railway tunnel," reveals Garth. "I suddenly realised that I couldn't hear any of the normal noises of the city inside it: no traffic, no planes overhead, no people. It was as if everyone had disappeared in that minute. It made me wonder what it would be like if everyone did just disappear one day, save for a few unfortunates who were left."

## THE COMPETITION

To celebrate the release of Shade's Children we want you to design a new cover or cover illustration for the book. In order to get some inspiration, pay a visit to our sister magazine SFX's site at [www.sfx.co.uk](http://www.sfx.co.uk) and read the free extract.

Then, create an illustration you think is fitting to the plot at the following specs:

**To fit within 200mm (h) x 153mm (w)**  
**300dpi**  
**CMYK or RGB**  
**TIFF**

Send entries on CD/DVD to:  
**Shade's Children competition**  
**ImagineFX**  
**Future Publishing**  
**30 Monmouth St**  
**Bath**  
**BA1 2BW**

**The closing date is 30 October 2006**

Find out more about Shade's Children and other Garth Nix books at [www.garthnix.co.uk](http://www.garthnix.co.uk)



Renowned Australian fantasy author Garth Nix is about to launch Shade's Children in the UK.

## Great prizes!

The winning entry will receive four copies of Shade's Children with their design on the dust jacket – a completely limited edition and one-off prize! They will also receive the entire Garth Nix back catalogue and a subscription to ImagineFX. Three runners up will receive the Garth Nix back catalogue and subscription to the mag.



**The rules:** 1. Employees of Future Publishing Ltd, HarperCollins and their immediate families or agents are not eligible to enter this competition. 2. Only one entry per person. Multiple entries will be discarded. 3. Entries must be received by 30 October 2006, which is the closing date. 4. Entries will be judged by ImagineFX and HarperCollins. 5. The winner must agree to allow their image to be used in ImagineFX and in any promotional/marketing material. The winning artist must also agree to any image manipulation/enhancement necessary. 6. No cash alternative. 7. The Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Unfortunately we are unable to return the CDs or DVDs containing your artwork. 8. All information is correct at time of going to press.



## Events

### FANTASY & SCI-FI ART SHOWS AROUND THE WORLD

#### ARMADILLOCON 28

**DATE:** 11-13 August

**URL:** [www.armadillocon.org](http://www.armadillocon.org)

Although the primary focus of this convention is literary science fiction, it also celebrates art, media, gaming and other sci-fi related jollities. Artist guest of honour is Ellisa Mitchell, and there's a bustling art show. Doubletree Hotel North, Austin, Texas.

#### HORRORFIND WEEKEND 2006

**DATE:** 11-13 August

**URL:** [www.horrorfindweekend.com](http://www.horrorfindweekend.com)

A giant horror convention, you won't be surprised to hear, featuring an art show for the first time this year. Arranged and directed by artist Chad Savage, expect to find all manner and media of gore, goth and gratuitous nastiness. Marriott Hunt Valley Inn, Maryland.

#### BUBONICON 38

**DATE:** 18-20 August

**URL:** [bubonicon.home.att.net](http://bubonicon.home.att.net)

Nothing to do with a deadly plague and everything to do with sci-fi, particularly the written kind. As ever there's an art show, with guest of honour Kathleen Lowe, video game and watercolour artist - and don't forget to check out illustrator David Mattingly, too. Wyndham Airport Hotel, Albuquerque, NM.

#### WORLDCON

**DATE:** 23-27 August

**URL:** [www.laconiv.org](http://www.laconiv.org)

This is the big one for SF lovers: the 64th World Sci-Fi Convention, five days of art, literature, gaming, anime, cosplay and heated debates about Star Trek. The multi talented, multimedia James Gurney is artist guest of honour, just part of the enormous art show. Held at the Hilton Anaheim, Anaheim Marriott, and Anaheim Convention Center, in Anaheim, CA.

#### DRAGON\*CON

**DATE:** 1-4 September

**URL:** [www.dragoncon.org](http://www.dragoncon.org)

They don't come much bigger than this, the ultimate annual fantasy-themed event. More than 20,000 visitors and an enormous art show make this a mecca for fantasy artists the world over. Held at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis and Hyatt Regency Atlanta Hotels, Atlanta, Georgia.

**IF YOU KNOW OF ANY FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND YOU THINK THEY SHOULD BE FEATURED HERE, PLEASE SEND US THE DETAILS. EMAIL THEM TO THE EDITOR AT: [ROB@IMAGINEFX.COM](mailto:ROB@IMAGINEFX.COM)**

#### CON-VERSION 22, CANADA

**DATE:** 11-13 August

**URL:** [www.con-version.org](http://www.con-version.org)

 Continuing the fine tradition of punning names, this sci-fi con focuses largely on the literary angle, but isn't afraid to dip its humanoid toes into other areas. The art show features everything from 2D drawing to real sculpture. Best Western Hospitality Inn, Calgary.

#### CON-VERSION 22

Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention

Featured Guests:

David Weber

Larry Niven

R. Scott Bakker

John Hertz

August 11-13, 2006

Where:

Best Western

Hospitality Inn

127 Southern Drive SE

Calgary, Alberta

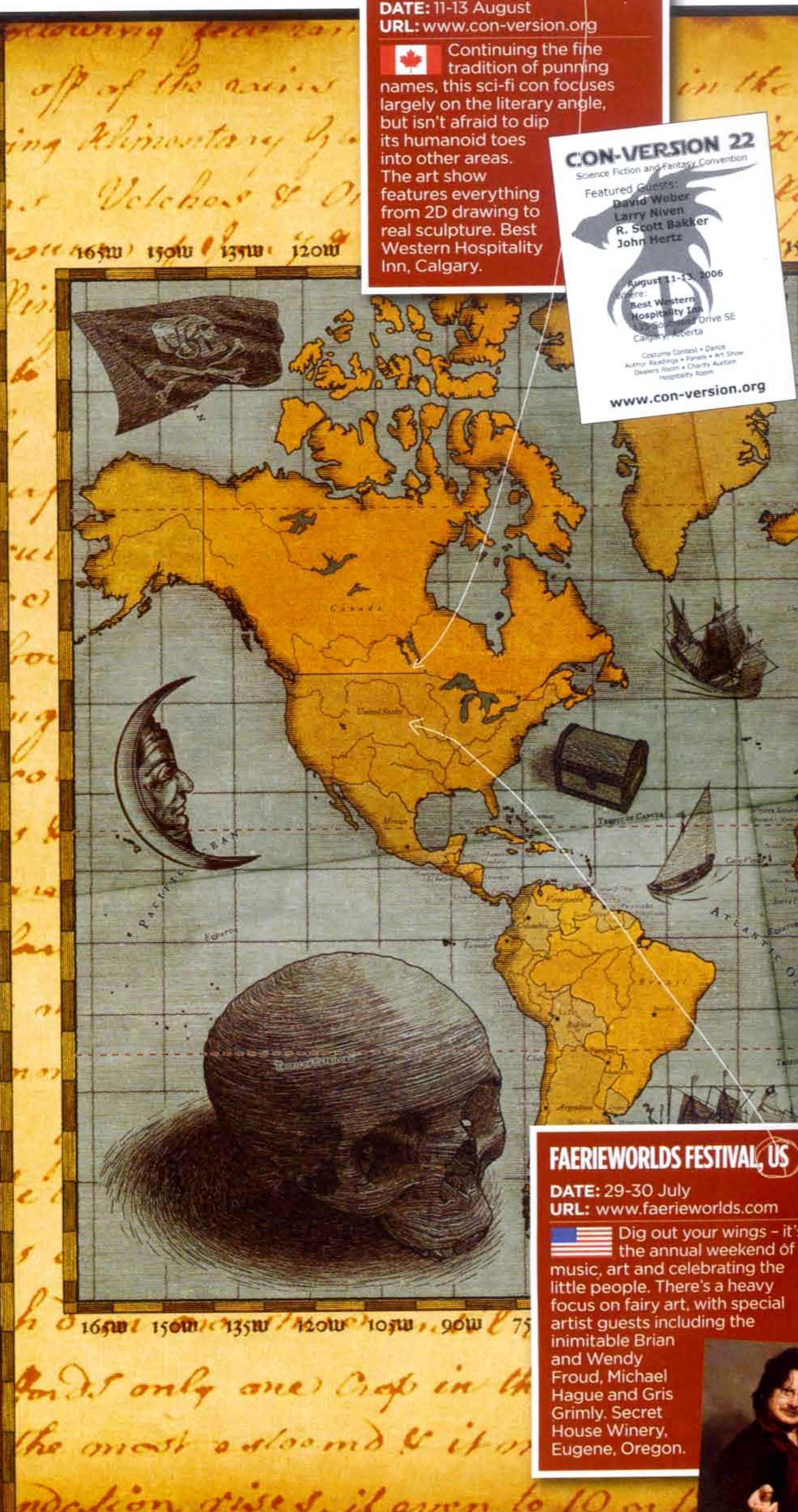
Costume Contest • Dance

Author Readings • Panels • Art Show

Dealers Room • Charity Auction

Hospitality Room

[www.con-version.org](http://www.con-version.org)



#### FAERIEWORLDS FESTIVAL, US

**DATE:** 29-30 July

**URL:** [www.fairieworlds.com](http://www.fairieworlds.com)

 Dig out your wings - it's the annual weekend of music, art and celebrating the little people. There's a heavy focus on fairy art, with special artist guests including the inimitable Brian and Wendy Froud, Michael Hague and Gris Grimly, Secret House Winery, Eugene, Oregon.






# The fantasy art world calendar...


## DISCWORLD CONVENTION 2006, UK

DATE: 18-21 August  
URL: [www.dwcon.org](http://www.dwcon.org)

 Expect plenty of hardcore Pratchett-related frivolity at this massive celebration of Discworld - featuring the man himself. There's no art show as such, but special guests include comic author Graham Higgins, and there's bound to be heaps of inspiration on tap. Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley, Leicestershire.

## FINNCON 2006, FINLAND

DATE: 18-20 August  
URL: [www.finncon.org](http://www.finncon.org)

 The largest SF and fantasy event in the Nordic countries, rivalling some of the Eurocons in terms of size, taking in movies, comics, art, literature and more. English is spoken throughout (as well as Finnish and Swedish), and what's more, admission is free. Held at the Helsinki Congress Paasitorni centre, Helsinki.

## Last year I went to...

### IMAGINEFX EDITOR ROB CARNEY REPORTS ON AN EXCITING AND EVENTFUL DRAGONCON 2005

I'd never been to DragonCon before, and I was very excited. After a long flight from Gatwick to Atlanta, I arrived at the Downtown Hilton, a new partner hotel for the show.

I was immediately struck by the friendliness of the Georgia people. Everyone was keen to help and I soon felt at home in the bar. In fact, while sitting at the bar, I started talking to a delegate who turned out to be Shane Felux - director of the Star Wars fan film Revelations and friends with IFX contributor Adam Benton. Small world, huh?

Day one of DragonCon I was up early and ready to go. I was amazed at the sheer amount of exhibitors - this place is a collector's dream. After spending all my cash on various posters and comics, I paid a visit to the Art Show. Although mainly traditional, most of the art was well-presented. It did have a low-key feel, and there was only a small section of digital art. Still, it was always buzzing.

The parade on the Saturday has to be seen to be believed - hundreds of storm troopers, monsters and orcs on the streets of Atlanta. Surreal isn't the word. I had a great time though, and those in the parade did their best to get the audience participating (and scared).

The party on the last night was brilliant fun, and although I felt a little out of place in my polo shirt among the hordes of Vaders and Wolverines, it was a night that will stick with me forever.



Yes, it may be a man in an Iron Man suit to you, but to me it was Iron Man, and it always will be.




Rob Carney is editor of ImagineFX. He's currently deciding between an Ewok and Gollum costume for DragonCon 2006.

For DragonCon info visit [www.dragoncon.org](http://www.dragoncon.org)

## FESTIVAL OF FANTASTIC FILMS 2006, UK

DATE: 1-3 September  
URL: [fantastic-films.com/festival](http://fantastic-films.com/festival)

 Showcasing the best new amateur and professional indie films in the SF, fantasy and horror genres, including screenings of rare and obscure classics. Most special guests yet to be announced, but leading horror writer Ramsey Campbell will be putting in an appearance. Held at the Day's Hotel, Manchester.

Map by Marcus Penna,  
[www.elefantecomunica.com.br/mentes\\_images](http://www.elefantecomunica.com.br/mentes_images)



# Artist Q&A

GOT A QUESTION FOR OUR EXPERTS? EMAIL [HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM](mailto:HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM)

## The FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART **ImagineFX** panel

SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS:  
SEE PAGE 43 FOR DETAILS

### Aly Fell



Aly Fell is a concept artist at Eurocom Entertainment Software. He produced the cover art for ImagineFX issue 3.

[www.darkrising.co.uk](http://www.darkrising.co.uk)

### Gary Tonge



Gary is a renowned art director in the video games industry and also works on a freelance basis creating concept art.

[www.visionafar.com](http://www.visionafar.com)

### Henning Ludvigsen



Norwegian artist Henning has 12 years illustration and design experience. He is an art director for a game developer in Greece.

[www.henningludvigsen.com](http://www.henningludvigsen.com)

### Melanie Delon



Melanie is a freelance illustrator based in Paris, France. Fantasy and dreamy subjects are her favourite to paint.

[www.eskarina-circus.com](http://www.eskarina-circus.com)

### Frazer Irving



Award-winning UK illustrator Frazer has worked for DC Comics, Pepsi, 2000AD, Marvel Enterprises and Hasbro.

[www.frazerirving.com](http://www.frazerirving.com)

### Michael Loh



Michael is a Malaysian-born Chinese Australian, working in Hong Kong. He's a self-taught fantasy artist and photographer.

[www.e-maginaryarts.com](http://www.e-maginaryarts.com)

### Kuang Hong



Based in Beijing, 25-year-old Kuang works as an art director. He also freelances as an illustrator for novels.

[www.zemotion.net](http://www.zemotion.net)



**NEW!**  
Full-size  
Q&A images  
are on the  
DVD



Start out blocking in rough colours and contrasts. Lay down a good base for the detailing process later. Don't fiddle at this stage; just be bold and do the grunt work.

## Question

I was hoping to see a Q&A on how to paint plumage and feathers... I find them really difficult to paint and need expert help! *Damian Giggleswick, UK*

## Answer

### Henning replies



From an artist's point of view, painting plumage and feathers is often a dreaded process. But even if it is, without doubt, time consuming, it doesn't have to be complex or difficult at all. Here's the method I would recommend for painting such items.

There are many types of feathers, and if you plan on painting birds, you should study theory about different

kinds of feathers and their purpose. Some feathers are for protecting against the weather, some for insulating the body and some are for decoration. Then there are flight feathers that are stiffer and are, obviously, for flying purposes.

My suggested approach to feathers is to go back to basics, as I believe that completely hand-painted plumage looks a lot better than a repetitive feather-shaped brush, or a perfectly repeated row of feathers in overlapping layers.

I would start off with a simple outline drawing to settle the approximate shape, and then start shaping up each feather quite roughly. To get the sense of layers, make sure to add some soft shadow along the side of each feather where one feather becomes overlapped by the next one.

By keeping a nice transition from dark to bright, you will have a nice base to start detailing. Use the Smudge tool for this, switching to a small Sharp brush at the end.



## Step-by-step: Creating an authentic-looking plumage



**1** Make a rough outline of the basic shapes of the plumage you plan to paint, and roughly sketch the feathers. Place the feathers in overlapping layers. It's always helpful to look at pictures of birds and wings to understand this.



**2** Now add some shape to each feather, keeping the outer edge bright. Add shadow where any feathers overlap. The quill is the strong stem of the feather. It's usually white at the base gradually changing into the main colour of the feather.



**3** Use the Smudge tool with a small brush to add shape. The fine fibres are too small to draw individually, so add a few to suggest texture. Leave gaps to break up the edges, especially at the base of the feathers. Brush up with a small brush at the end.

### Question

I love sketching with a pencil. Is there any way I can create realistic pencil lines in Photoshop?

Jason Cooke, US

### Answer

Aly replies



The short answer is no. A 'realistic' pencil line is best achieved using a pencil! However,

Photoshop is very good at emulating different media and can get pretty close. If you've got a tablet or even better, a Cintiq, you can also achieve very natural linework using these.

Load up the Dry Media Brushes in Photoshop and you will see a number of great Graphite Pencil options – my favourite is the Conté Pencil. This is a textured brush that gives a finish as though you're drawing on a rough canvas. Select this brush and uncheck the Dual Brush box. Then check the Shape Dynamics box. Go in to the Shape Dynamic options and make sure Size Jitter is set to zero and Control is on Pen Pressure in the drop-down menu. With the Opacity and Flow set to 100 per cent you'll find this makes a great sketching brush, with some nicely textured thicks and thins as you increase or pull back on the pressure. Play around



with the texture options as well to change surfaces.

Try using Photoshop's Graphite Pencil for a harder edge, too. I prefer the Conté Brush with the slight adaptations I've made. Don't forget to save the brush!

Using the Conté Pencil brush with the Shape Dynamics on and 100 per cent Opacity is a great sketching option. Thicks and thins come naturally with practice, but a general rule to bear in mind is that they tend to emphasise mass, becoming thicker with more volume and weight.



As you start to refine detail using this brush, you can bring the opacity and flow rate down to create greyscale. You can also use it as an eraser option by fading the detail off, as I've done with the hair on this character.

### Artist's secret

ADD COLOUR, KEEP THE SKETCH If you want to add colour to a black and white line drawing without covering up your original drawing, do this: create a new layer and in the Layer Mode Options drop-down menu, select Overlay. Any colour you now apply to this layer will only show up where it covers the black or grey line underneath.

Aly Fell, concept artist



The completed sketch with some colour added.





You don't have to paint each strand of hair one by one; working them in a block is easier and gives a more natural look to them.

## Question

### How can I add more movement to hair in my paintings?

Caroline Quimm, UK

## Answer

### Melanie replies



Adding movement or dynamism to hair in illustration is very important. Even if a character is not actually moving themselves, the hair will not be static and never pasted to the skin – unless you're going for a very stylised look – so adding some wild locks into your design will give a more natural look to any haircut.

In the painting here, there is a lot of wind so her hair shouldn't be stiff – it should be messy and flying all over the place. To achieve this I start by drawing the base of the hair, then I smooth and texture it. Once I'm satisfied with this, I erase the extremities with a Spackled brush and smooth them out again.

Next, I add some light to the extremities and for this, I use the same shade as the sky – a blueish green that will blend very well with the blonde colour of her hair. It isn't necessary to do this precisely; the best thing to do is to lay the colour down with a Basic Round edge with a very low opacity and apply it all over by following the movement of her hair.

Once it's done, I blur and erase certain parts to get rid of all the noticeable brush strokes.

Then I duplicate the layer and change its mode into Soft light with a four per cent Opacity, to give the hair more contrast. Now it's almost finished, I just need to make a couple of locks stand out with a basic dynamic shape (not forgetting to blur the extremities...) and there you have it, lovely flowing hair.



Don't be afraid to add light – this will give the feeling of movement and lightness.

## Question

I've been following the speed painting tutorial in IFX 04, but I can't loosen my brush strokes. What should I do? Si Hardy, US

## Answer

### Gary replies



This is quite a common dilemma when moving from full illustrations to quick and loose speed painting. The best advice I can give is to forget about detailing altogether and try to avoid using the 'undo' button. When I am speed painting, I try to let the aggressive brush strokes build up the detail and texture of the piece. In many cases, the brush strokes you see as mistakes can be a great foundation

for the strokes you add to fix the problem. As you keep adding layers of brush strokes, certain shapes and nuances will begin to stand out, created simply by the many brush strokes you add during the speed paint. This method will also give the end piece a unique, deep textural feel from the constant adding of strokes rather than removing 'mistakes'. That said, if you really mess up an area with a 100 point brush, press undo!



It may not seem like it, but don't think for one minute that the detailing and texture of this particular piece has been carefully thought about and delicately brushed...



...for instance, each and every figure in this image was created very quickly using rough brush strokes providing complete freedom from the need to add detail.

## Question

Is there an easy – or lazy – way to draw crowd scenes in comics using Photoshop? Tim Lane-Nott, UK

## Answer

### Frazer replies



Basically, no. But, there are tricks you can employ. Scribble some chaotic lines to give an impression of the crowd scene. Draw over this in layers with grey silhouettes. Using different shades of grey I can explore depth, and I can modify them without worrying about ruining my drawing. Next, create a new layer and draw over the figures to pick out individual characters, and then just ditch the silhouettes.



Experiment with different shades of grey to pick out some of your figures in the crowd, while keeping others in the background.



## Question

I always go crazy and use too much colour in a painting. How do I, or what's the best way to use muted colours to good effect in a picture? **Brad Donald, Australia**

## Answer

Hong replies



I have paintings that are made purely with muted and dim colours, and also those that have a fair share of colour – but are not completely dominated with them. Here I'll show you the best way to use colour to a good effect rather than just painting a whole image in one colour palette. I'm using Painter 6.0 to demonstrate.

In terms of colour usage, it's pretty much the same in Photoshop as in Painter. The first step is always to block background colours. In this image, I've used dim and light greys a lot, because the whole background is just dark clouds (see first image, right).

You'll probably notice that among the clouds there are some light colours, for example the rims have very light blues, and closer to the moon there are yellows, but still the overall touch is grey. These demonstrate that the lights around the dark clouds affect how the colours turn out. This is more of a fantasy touch, but I believe it's easy

to relate to if you think of the orange and pinks during sunrise or sunset – the principle behind it is the same.

While painting the character I added some brighter colours, but the selection of colour is still leaning towards greys (see below right). This way the character can relate and merge into the background easier and it doesn't conflict. By using

subtle changes in the colours the image is brought to life.

This is how I paint when working around basic, muted colours: first lay out the basic colours over the big areas, then add in some lighter and slightly darker colours. Take note of how much pressure I'm exerting on the pen and let the colours in the painting merge together.



The picture uses a mostly grey background, with slight changes to the colours of the clouds as affected by various light sources. The image on the left, shows the creation of the background, whereas the image on the right, shows the addition of the main character.



## Artist's secret

### PREPARE PROPERLY

Planning and blocking out colours, deciding lighting, light and shadow relations are very important procedures before colouring an image. This will help you to stay on track. List different ideas, try to roughly lay down colours, then pick a palette you like.  
Kuang Hong, digital artist



The completed image using muted colours.

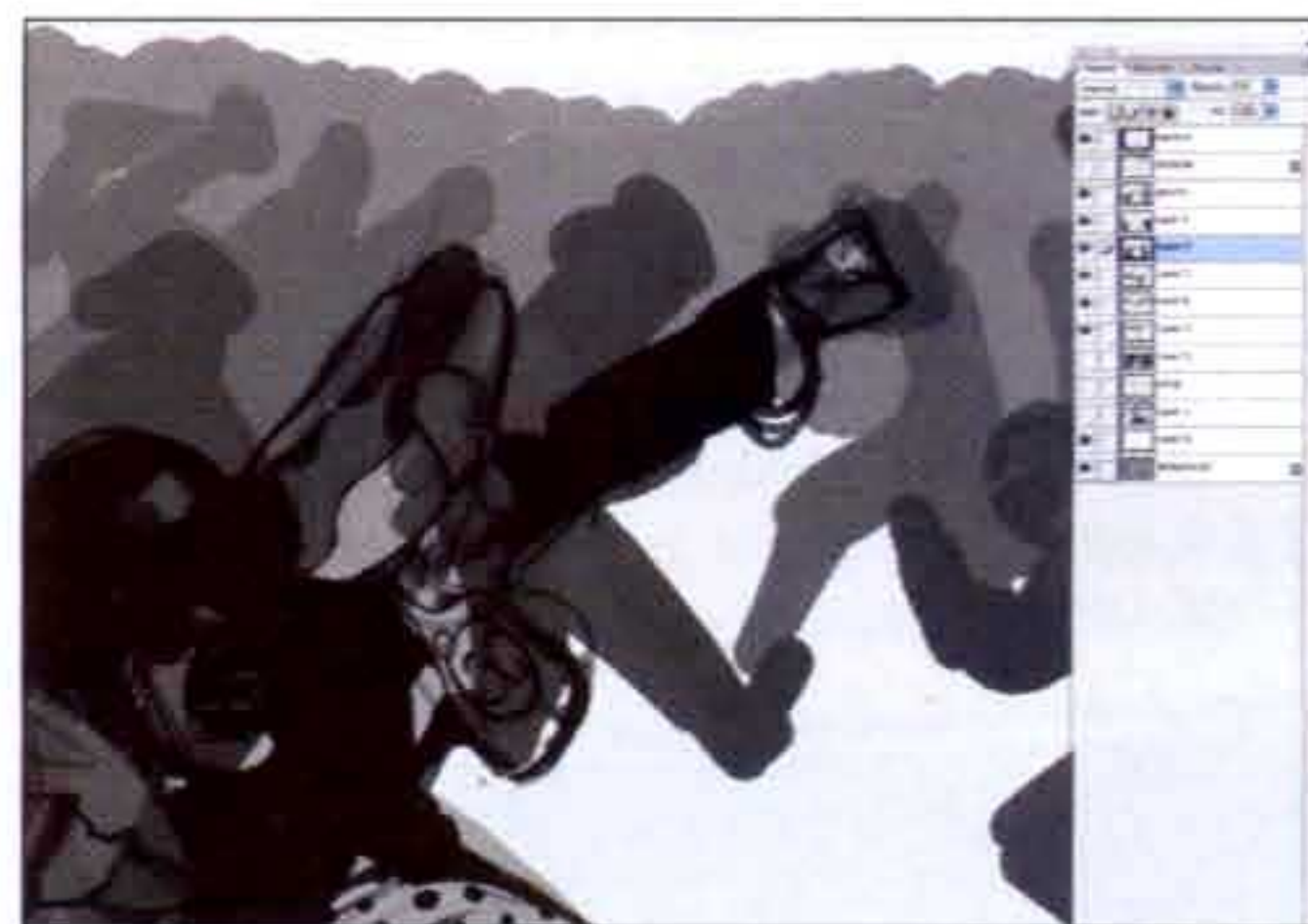
## Step-by-step: Quick crowd scenes



**1** Start with a very rough scribble to get a feel for the sort of crowd you need. Here I wanted two opposing forces to be rushing into a confrontation. This is the initial sketch that I came up with.



**2** Using layers, roughly scribble away at the layers of figures until you feel comfortable with the complexity. At this point you should pick out key figures to go ahead and draw.



**3** Lighten the silhouettes a bit and make a new top layer. You can use the shapes as guides to then focus on bringing out the characters without too much messy drawing. It's not easy per se, but this does make it less frustrating.



## Question

How do I go about applying textures to objects in Poser 6?

Jason Drake, UK

## Answer

Michael replies



There are several methods to texture objects in Poser. The more complex way is using UV mapping, where every point in a texture file is precisely mapped to a corresponding point on the object to be textured. If you create a UV map for an object you can only use it for that object. However, the advantage of using UV mapping is that you have better control over the texturing of your object, but you need to spend quite a lot of time setting it up.

If you don't have a UV-mapped texture you can still apply a texture to an object surface easily in Poser 6. In my example on the right I have created a scene using the DAZ Millennium Dragon which comes with several UV texture maps. I want to use a reptile texture for the wing membrane. To change the texture I go into the Materials Room tab. I use the Advance tab and select the WingMembrane material of the Dragon. I then create a new image map node linked to the Diffuse\_Colour attribute. Within the image map node I click on Image\_Source to browse and select the reptile texture file from my texture folder. Poser 6 correctly maps the texture to the wings.



You can add texture to objects in Poser 6 by going to the Advance tab of the Materials Room and creating image map nodes.

## Step-by-step: How to add texture



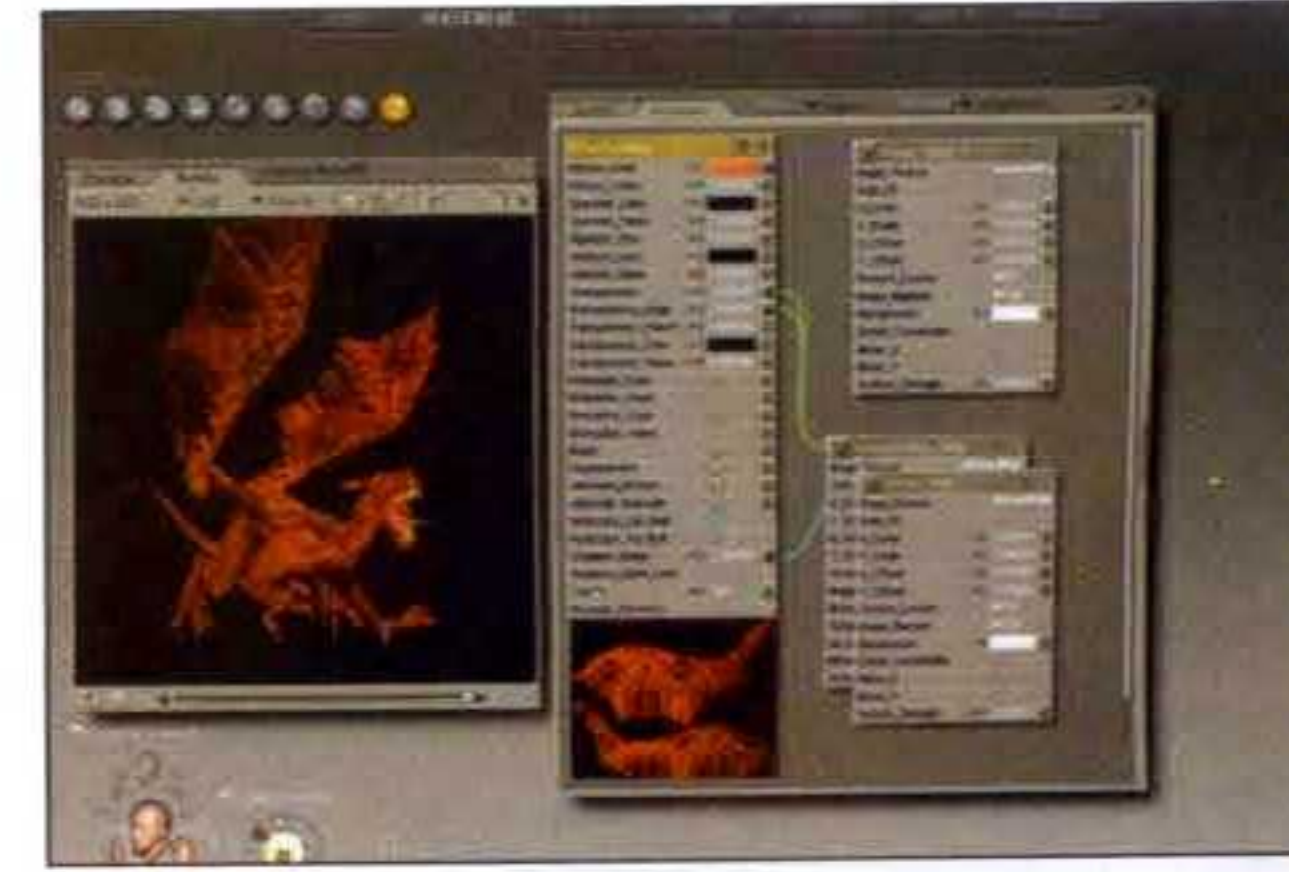
**1** The Advance tab of the Materials Room displays all the material attributes for the Dragon object and a preview window. Selecting the WingMembrane material shows the texture attributes. I need to make changes to the Diffuse\_Colour attribute.



**2** To associate a texture image file to the Diffuse\_Colour attribute I need to create an image node. Click on the 'plug' icon next to the Diffuse\_Colour attribute to create a new image map node by clicking on New Node>2D Textures>image\_map.



**3** I can now see a new Image\_Map node linked to the Diffuse\_Colour 'plug'. Clicking on the Image\_Source attribute on this node brings up a file browser display for selecting the texture files in your PC folders. I search for and select my reptile texture file.



**4** The texture I selected appears below the PoserSurface box. I can now fine-tune the image by changing the Diffuse\_Colour, Specular\_Colour and Ambient\_Colour values. Preview the final result by clicking Render in the Render menu.

## Artist's secret

### ACHIEVING TEXTURE REALISM

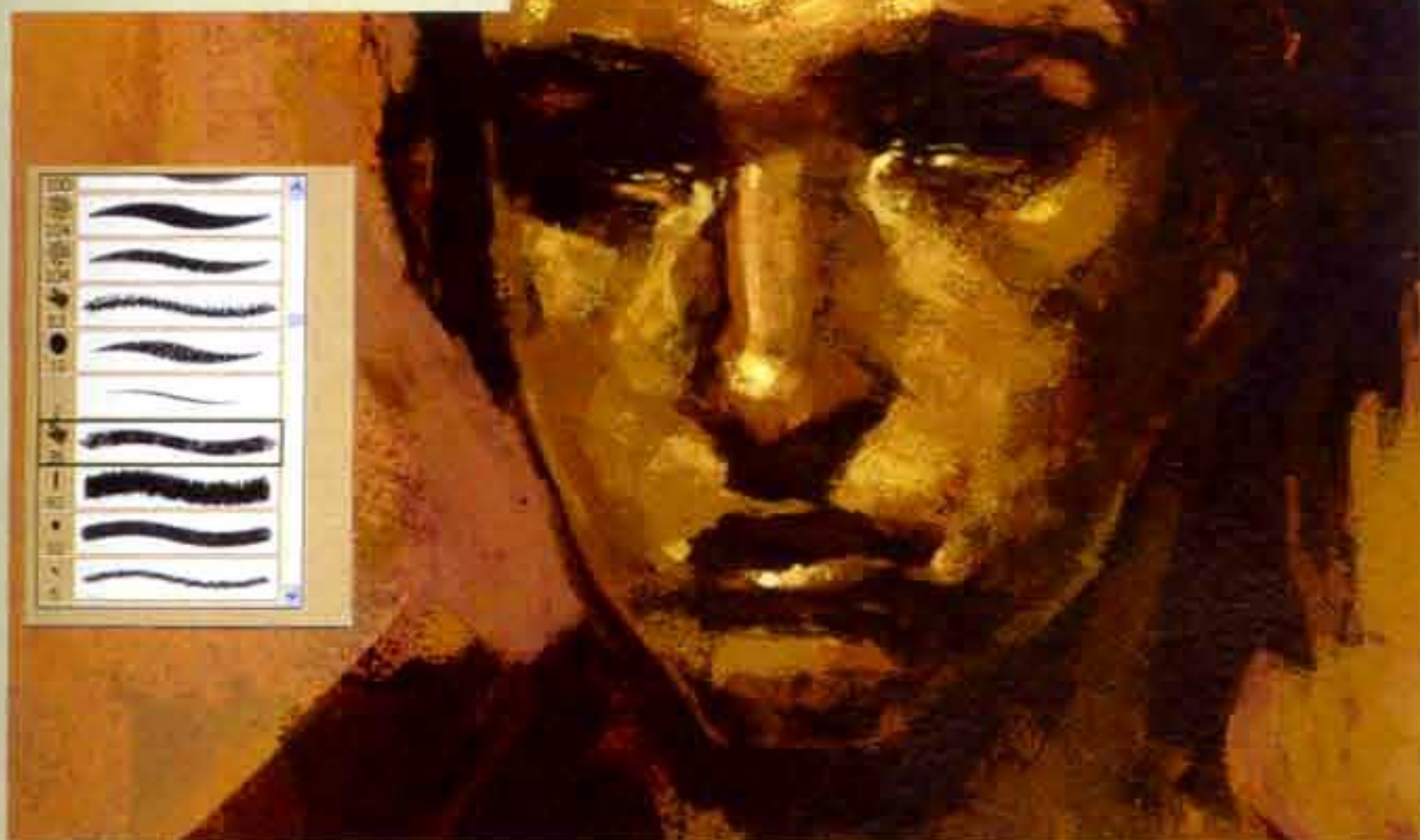
The difference between a good image and a fantastic image is the details that you put on your objects. One way of adding more details is to apply a bump map with your texture. Try using the New Node>3D Textures>Cellular or other 3D options in the Poser 6 Material Room to create a more interesting object surface.

Michael Loh, digital artist





Study faces indepth to learn how to define light and shadow on them. Hard-edged brushes are best for men's faces.



**Question**  
I'm painting in Photoshop with a hard edged brush, but the faces look very rough. How do I fix this? *Ernie Chang, UK*

**Answer**  
Hong replies

In Photoshop, Rough and Hard edged brushes are extremely useful. They are often used in matte paintings or images that emphasise surroundings or environmental work. If you want to use a Hard edged brush for faces, it's usually more suitable for men and rougher looks.

For the face in the above image I used only one brush. The picture has a rough and rugged feeling, but the thick strokes also give the piece strong character as well.



Hard-edged brushes create interesting textures and can change the feel of your image. Use softer brushes to define features for a softer look.

You'll find that brushes like these aren't that hard to control, but it's more important here to have a good knowledge of facial structures. If you have studied and practiced faces enough, you'll have no problems in defining the light and shadow areas on them.

If you're looking to further define features – or you want a softer look for women – try this: after blocking the colours, which determines the areas of light and shadow, use some slightly softer and smaller brushes to add finer details – ie, eyes, brows, nose, lips, etc (see image left). Normally you need to use more than one brush: it defines the different features better and adds more character.

Overall, Hard edged brushes give nice textures and a different feel to images depending on what looks you want to achieve. On the image to the left, it's a traditional painted look.

**Question**

Can you show me how to easily add a fantasy glow to a picture? *Brian Jensen, Denmark*

**Answer**

Henning replies



Using a soft brush with a low flow works nicely. But if you really want to achieve a global glow effect, there are

simple shortcuts, although this can change your picture's overall colour values. Start with a flattened picture, duplicate it into a new layer on top of the original. Now open the Gaussian Blur dialogue (Filter>Blur>Gaussian blur...) and drag the radius slider until all the details get blurry. Now, go to Edit/Fade Gaussian Blur, leave the Opacity at 100 per cent and set the Mode to Screen, and click OK. Do the same routine with Gaussian Blur, fade the Gaussian Blur, but set the Mode to Soft Light. Now you can blend the light to achieve a glow by sliding the Opacity slider on the Layers menu.



Create a simple, soft glow with a Gaussian Blur and Fade Gaussian Blur routine, but be careful not to overdo it.

**Question**

Can I bring up the heat and brightness of light on images in Photoshop without re-painting them? *Peter Wallace, Scotland*

**Answer**

Aly replies



You can get some great effects with the Dodge Layer option in Photoshop. What I do is fill a layer above my



The original version of this image had fiery wings, but they needed bringing up a bit. As you apply the lighter colour to the Colour Dodge layer, you'll see how it burns out brighter areas more strongly than dark ones with increased pressure.

artwork with black and then select Colour Dodge from the layer option drop-down menu. This makes the black seem invisible. Then, using a brush with a soft or blended edge and using white, you can 'burn' out the areas of your image where you want the light to seem stronger, and for highlights. Using different opacity and flow rates you can vary the 'burn out'. Much of this can be achieved by painting with the mode set to Colour Dodge, but this offers more control – you can erase or fade off certain areas as it's on a separate layer.



Here's the final result. The heat gives a stronger contrast and brings out the highlighting on the eyes and metalwork. As with a lot of Photoshop, this is one of the options it's wise not to overplay.



## Question Is using photo reference (when doing a digital painting) cheating? *Barry Peters, US*

### Answer Frazer replies



Well, it depends on how much you rely on the photograph to dictate the qualities of the painting, in my opinion. The short answer would be no, because it is a tried and tested method of informing art dating back to the invention of the camera obscura (and Velasquez apparently). Although in the modern digital age I think it is easy to fall into the trap of tracing everything and creating imagery which lacks the invention and passion of a crafted painting.

When I use photo reference (which is normally a time-saving thing, as I prefer the result I get when I don't use refs) I tend to use it more as a foundation from which I can expand in terms of textures, light and details, etc. In this example, I had to make an image swiftly as a favour for a friend, so I took the quick route and snapped four shots of my face and scribbled over them. Once I had roughed in the basic shapes of the heads and the positions of the features (as well as any major form-defining shadows) I turned the photo layers off and started drawing using my imagination.

As I hope you can see, there are major differences in the faces in the



As you can see here, the position of the heads is identical, as are the basic features, yet much has been altered to create a more textured and aggressive image.

final image and the photographs, which is an indicator to me at least that there has been no real 'cheating'. I guess the trick is to know when to stop referring to the photos, as too little info will defeat the purpose of using them in the first place, and too much info will kill the art. As with all things, it's best to experiment through trial and error – just play around with plenty of crazy photos...



Compare the two images. Tracing is one thing, referencing is another. Until I showed the image above, no-one knew or could tell that I had used photos of myself for the image, so the illusion of zombies wasn't ruined by the reality of technique.

Don't hesitate to blur some parts of the composition (like the background) – this will make the foreground more attractive.



## Question I'd like to add flowers to my scene, but I have trouble with them. They always look too hard and heavy – any tips? *Clothilde Boireau, France*

### Answer Melanie replies



The best way to understand flowers is to observe them. Pick up a flower and you'll notice that the petals are not opaque, hard and thick. They are relatively thin, soft and almost weightless. Focusing on these three characteristics is essential in obtaining a realistic look for your flowers.

I start by choosing my colours: here a kind of old pink/salmon, which will contrast nicely with the green/blue of the background.

To give a realistic feeling to them, I avoid drawing them 'flatly', it's better to paint them in perspective to give them more credibility. Then I add shadows and light. Once it's done I add some texture to the petals, trying to make them look light and silky. The thing to keep in mind is that petals are not flat, so you don't have to blend colours perfectly, and leaving some brush strokes will give nice colour variations to them. I add on different layers of texture and shade with a dynamic shape and I blur all the extremities.

The transparency is also very important. To work on it I choose a tone

slightly more saturated than the one I used for the basic light. It will bring transparency, life and a dynamic touch to the image. All these details will give the realism I want.

Then I finalise the image by blurring certain zones if needed and adding some texture to the other elements such as the leaves and the branches.



Using a spackled brush to smooth and blend colours will bring more texture variation to the petals.



## Question

When painting landscapes I find it hard to create interesting and believable cloud formations and shapes, they always seem to look peculiar and at odds with the rest of the piece – help! *Leigh Otway, UK*

## Answer

Gary replies



Clouds and skyward objects are some of the most enjoyable things to paint for me, but there are a few things to adhere to when creating them.

Firstly, clouds are very large scale objects and are therefore subject to atmospheric conditions and global lighting. It's important to remember that while a cloud shape may be detailed and crisp when up close to the viewer, it soon comes under the influence of these elements as it falls away into the distance, taking on more and more of the ambient colouring towards the horizon and diffusing as the sheer amount of 'air' between them and the viewer takes effect. This might seem complicated, but it's easy to see in nature. Just find a vantage point where you can view a few miles into the distance and you will be able to see how objects are affected.

Secondly, not all clouds are good to paint. On many occasions you may see

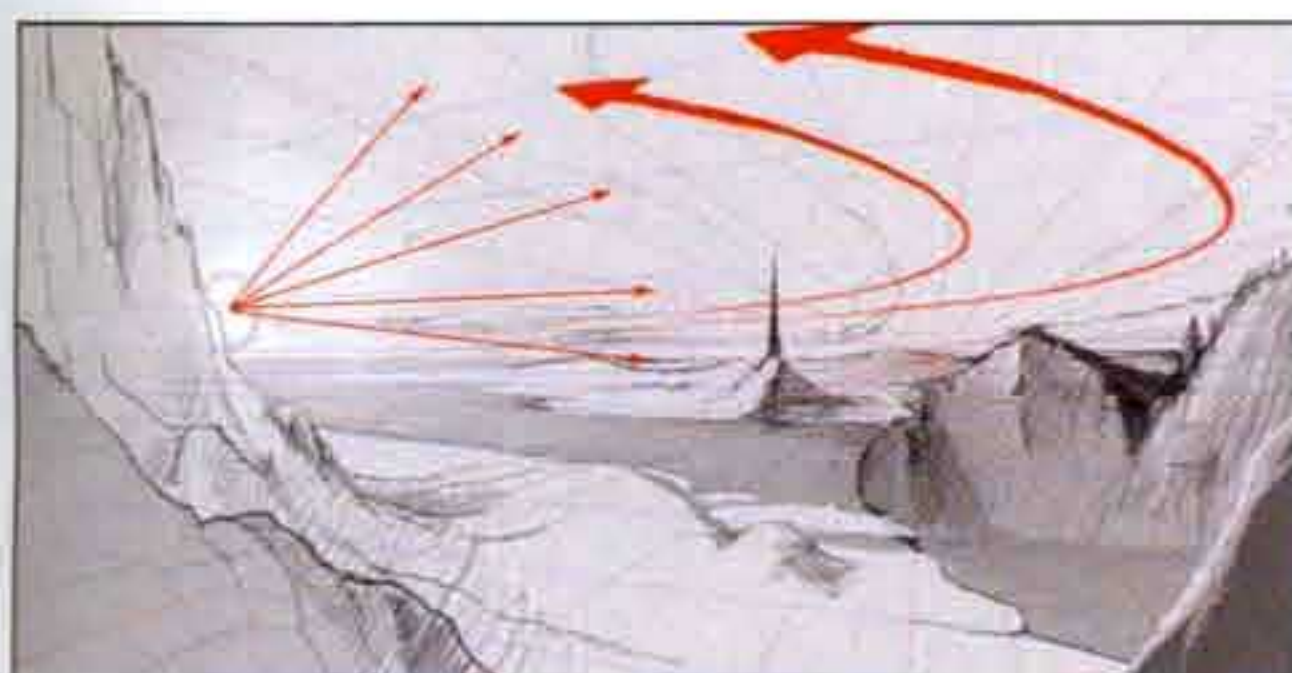


cloud formations that look perfectly plausible, but even if you were to translate them perfectly into a painting they might look odd. I use clouds to add perspective and depth to a piece and I try to avoid awkward shapes and odd formations as they can ruin the depth of a painted piece. A cleverly woven cloud formation can add depth

to an image, and also generate a majestic swooping feel to the composition or even conjure the feeling of movement. As with many painting techniques, do not expect to get a cloud creation/formation right straight away; try a number of shapes and layouts and study how each of them affects the full image's compositional balance.

By using the right techniques (as explained below) you can create incredible cloud formations that not only look realistic, but also convey a feeling of movement.

## Step-by-step: Realistic cloud formations



**1** On the sketch for this piece I have shown the intended layout for the clouds, drawing a large arc from the viewer's vantage point stretching towards the right of the piece and then arcing towards the light source.



**2** I have drawn some arrows to show the direction of the cloud, emphasising that some of the clouds' structure will be hit by direct light and the majority will be bathed in diffuse light reflected through the cloud or from the ground below.



**3** I have used the cloud formation as a way of framing the right of the piece. The swooping motion helps draw the eye from the light source, around the cloud perimeter and back to the sun, holding the composition together.

**Got a digital art problem?** Brushes out of control? Our panel can help. Email your question to our experts at [help@imaginefx.com](mailto:help@imaginefx.com) or write to **Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW.**





## NIM GROTESQUE

"This is the last example of my collaboration with artist Cara Mitten. I'm hoping we'll get to work together again, since I think we complement each other well," says Anthony.

## Artist PROFILE

### Anthony S. Waters



AGE: 37  
COUNTRY: US  
Washington-based  
freelance artist

Anthony has worked for many famous companies including Wizards of the Coast, (Magic: the Gathering), Lucasfilm (Star Wars: Episode II) and EA (James Bond).

**SOFTWARE USED:**  
Photoshop, Painter

**WEB:**  
[www.thinktankstudios.com](http://www.thinktankstudios.com)



# The art of **ANTHONY S. WATERS**



"An image should do more than tell you what a monster looks like. It should forge a gut connection with the subject." The visceral style of Mr Waters...

finding a path to fantasy art takes many forms, Anthony's was a gradual transition, and probably a route familiar to many. "I remember it being a steady progression from wildlife art to sharks, to dinosaurs, to dragons," he says. "It's not such a big leap from dinos to dragons, I suppose, nor sharks to dinos."

It's almost a logical progression, but the catalyst was fear. "My interest in sharks was kindled by the film *Jaws*, which traumatised the living daylights out of me," Anthony explains. Exploring his reaction, Anthony reached for pen and paper, and sharks have been battling this smear on their character ever since. "Maybe drawing about sharks helped me to chew up some of that fear."

Dungeons & Dragons happened next, introducing Anthony to the work of Errol Morris and Jeff Easley, which, he says, had a particular influence on him, and Frank Frazetta. "Frank led me to Pyle, Wyeth, Wrightson, Parrish and Kaluta, A whole world of possibilities was opened to me."

## ARTIST

While the evolution of a fantasy artist can be traced easily enough, Anthony finds the original creative impulse is harder to pin down, and admits that he's unable to point to any one moment of his life when he decided that he wanted to be an artist.

There's some indication of an early tendency to make use of crayons, but Anthony plays the modesty card by suggesting his artistic talent simply fills a void: "It's a good thing I'm able to make a living as an artist, since I stink at most other stuff!"

The 'most other stuff' that people are so often obsessed with is very often what they've been programmed to want. On the other hand fantasy, by definition, requires an exercise of the imagination. As Anthony puts it: "An image should do more than tell the viewer 'this is what a monster looks like'. It should forge some form of gut connection with the subject."

## BACK AND FORTH

So Anthony spent most of his childhood learning how to draw, attending the odd class here and there. His family moved around a lot when he was young, so teachers weren't always easy to come by, and the connection was forged directly between artist and medium.



## THE ARTIST

Conceptual designer for video games and illustrator for WotC's *Magic: the Gathering* card games, Anthony Scott Waters is an autograph hunter's favourite at conventions.



## SKIN STRIP

"Here's a piece I did for Hidden City Games, explains Anthony. "I was asked to envision what a spell that stripped you to the bone would look like."



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## PUMP STATION

Wizards of the Coast is just one of many well-known companies that can call Anthony a contributor. "It's an image from that series of five environment pieces I did for Wizards of the Coast," says Anthony.

➔ "I love drawing with pencil or pen," says Anthony. "That's usually the way I start, by noodling around until I get a solid idea and a good composition." The rough gets scanned, resized and printed, then: "I do a quick trace-off from that rough, and then work-up a nice tight underdrawing to work from." This becomes the basis of a painting.

The process is interesting for the way it moves back-and-forth between digital and analog. In a similar way to squinting, or closing one eye repeatedly, it serves to develop a balanced picture of your subject, adding poise to the final image. "Poise is one of those qualities you may acquire as

He developed his own narrative skills alongside his art at college. "I had a pair of amazing art teachers, one of whom, Paul Sparks, taught me as much about writing as art, and I grew a great deal during that time." It wasn't until later that Anthony began attending art schools: "Looking back on it, I'd recommend searching out a good art college if art's what you want to make a living from."

## AMBITION

When Anthony's not busy providing visual magic for the likes of WotC, Lucasfilm and EA, there's a hint of plans afoot, although he remains pretty cagey: "I try to hold most of my personal goals close to my chest; if you talk about a thing too much, you often end up not doing it at all."

**"I try to hold my personal goals close to my chest; if you talk about it too much you often end up not doing it at all"**

you go along," agrees Anthony, "but it's a harder thing to seek out as a hallmark."

## EMOTIONAL LEVEL

What really counts is storytelling. "It's a key issue in my approach," says Anthony. "Artists are visual storytellers." A painting, he believes, should be more than the sum of its technically accomplished whole. "You should be left wondering what just happened, or what's about to happen."

To generate this reaction the artist needs narrative skills. "When I'm doing more than straight concept work (for a client or myself) I aim to create an image that engages on some emotional level," says Anthony.

That's understandable, although most people find it difficult to hold a poker face for too long. Anthony is adamant, however. "It's better to set a schedule and start babbling when you have something to show," he insists.

Eventually, though, he relents a little. "I'll provide a teaser. I've got two projects in the works that'll end up in book form." Anthony S. Waters – novelist, screenwriter, director? "I'm busy at work on the first two!"

## STYLE

In the search for narrative, Anthony believes that style cannot be allowed to rule over substance, and he almost has an allergic reaction to the suggestion that he might ➔



## PHARAOH HOUND

"I did this several years ago for a now-defunct game company. It was meant to be a promotional piece for its game Universe. A group of peasants watch as a God pours forth his wrath upon some poor bastards," muses Anthony. "This piece was executed in Painter, before I switched to using Photoshop damn near exclusively," he adds.

# Anthony S. Waters ART IN FOCUS

What the surrealists did for us

"Stalking Vengeance is a spirit made from those whose deaths were unjust – a paranormal juggernaut made of bone and tombstones, bound together with raging souls." Anthony S. Waters is the man that supplies the magic in Magic cards.

Given the limited space on a Magic card, every element of a creature must be carefully conceived. "I used insectine wings to suggest the eventual flight of the soul, once justice has been done," says Anthony.

In developing his approach to painting Anthony doffs his hat to the great Zdzisław Beksiński. The Polish Surrealist helped him understand that "you don't need to have obviously human forms to make statements about the human condition."

So here, a high-key red background generates a foundation for the images, "the rage of the dead, personified." Built upon that base are staggered multiples of elements associated with the Stalker: "nested pairs of jaws, embedded skulls, bundles of gravestones collecting to form legs." Anthony reveals darkly.

Anthony wants to conjure a reaction in his viewers, not just draw them a picture, and, he says, there's a slim but crucial difference between pointing your finger in the general direction and "grabbing the viewer's head to make them see your intent." That being the case, he adds: "The degree to which your art is successful rests on how little dictation is taking place."



# Anthony S. Waters' **ARTIST TIP**

## **Big brushes saves blushes**

"I owe this tip to my buddy Todd Lockwood. He once advised me: 'Always use a brush that seems one size too big for what you're working on. It'll keep you from getting too precious with whatever you're painting.' He's spot-on about that. (He's spot-on about damn near everything.)"



### **CYTOSPAWN SHAMBLER**

Here's one of Anthony's recent Magic: the Gathering cards. Never one to miss an opportunity for an irreverent take on his art, Anthony explains what it is: "It's a blobular blobthing made up of lots of blobby blobness. Sorry for all the technical jargon."





Anthony S. Waters  
**ARTIST TIP**

**Give your mind a workout**

"This tip is part technical, part artistic process. Always try to push beyond the first thing that comes out of your pen. Sometimes the first notion you have is the best. More often, though, you'll benefit from cranking through a dozen or so variations (or two-dozen, or three). The mind's an organ, but treat it like a muscle. Work that sucker out."

**FEROCIOUS CHARGE**

"Here's a Magic piece I did in collaboration with my compadre and fellow artist, Cara Mitten," reveals Anthony. "She did the sketching and underpainting, I took it to a finish."





**DREAD SLAG**

Another recent Magic: the Gathering card from Anthony. "I'm happy with this one," he beams.

have a 'style' of his own. "I honestly don't think I've got a style," he says. "It's not something I've been crafting consciously. I just see my answer to a given visual problem."

To Anthony, style is something quite separate from art. "Style can even get in the way of your art, by causing you to develop, and come to rely on, visual shortcuts." It becomes, he adds, a shorthand for laziness. "You stop taking the time to figure out how morning light falls on snow, or what a night-time scene in a village should look like."

Instead of getting out there and joining up the gaps in your skills, he goes on, "you start relying on what knowledge you have in your head to make a stab at the challenge, and use style to gloss over the ignorance." This, he believes, is the enemy of promise. "From that standpoint, style scares me."

That said, Anthony admits that he doesn't actively avoid having a style, but adds that the creative demands of being a concept artist encourage him to find alternate ways to frame his work. The main thing, he says, is "to try and make sure I don't get caged."

## HOLD TIGHT

Given such potential pitfalls, how can the artist remain focused? Anthony is clear:

"The main thing to keep in mind when

**“Style can get in the way of your art, by causing you to develop, and come to rely on, visual shortcuts”**

you're creating a work of art is what are you trying to say?" If you've gone to the trouble of devising a story, he believes it only makes sense to let it do the work it was born for – giving your image a purpose, a life.

"I try to hold on to that thought from start to finish," he adds. "At the beginning the connection's pretty clear. You're at the fun part, generating the ideas, and that's when the meaning of what you're going for is hanging right in front of you."

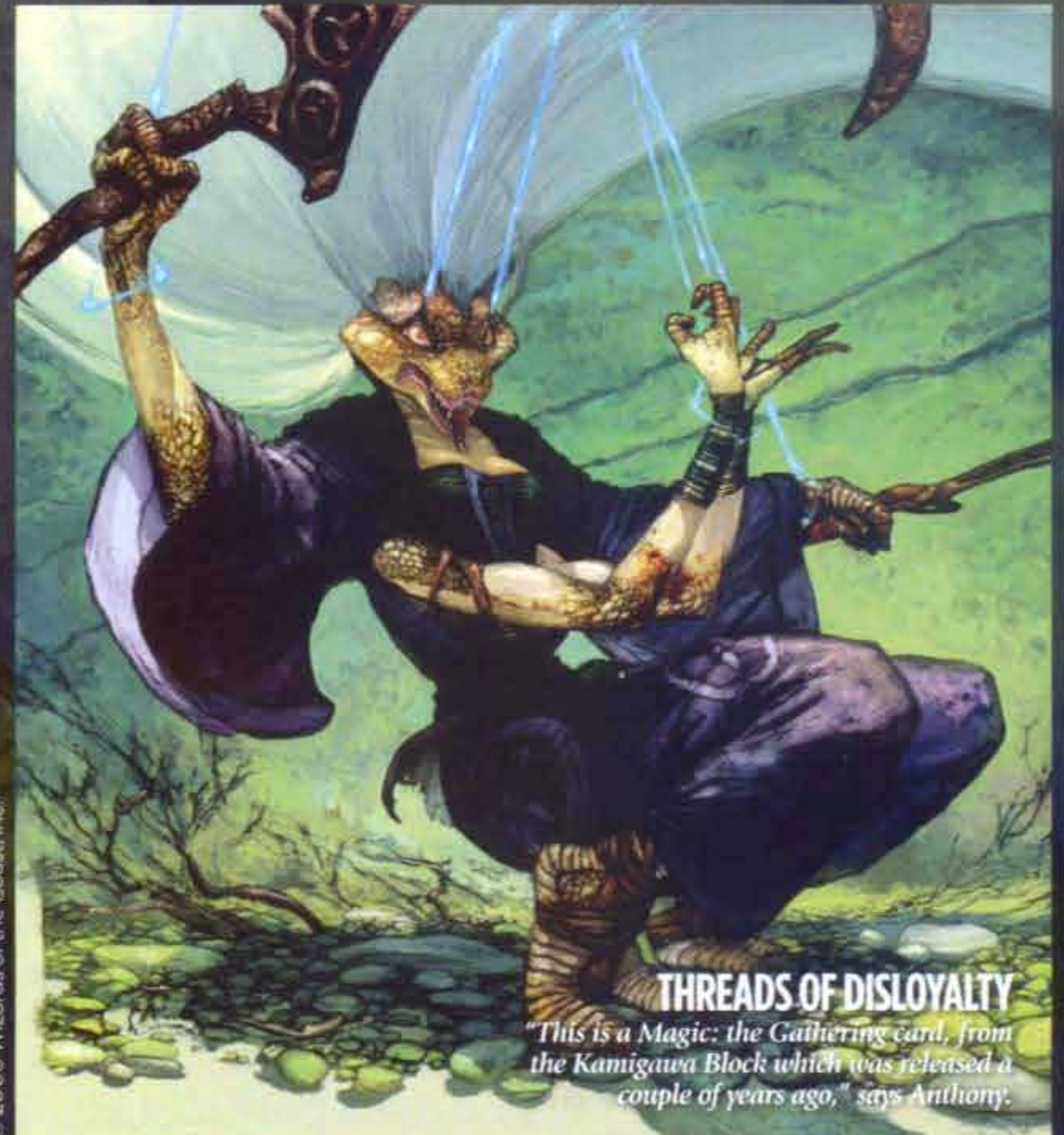
But as a particular piece of work progresses, he adds, it's easy to become distracted. "It's when you start thinking about colour choices and rendering that you can lose track of that underpinning value: what you're trying to express."

Anthony believes this to be the last big obstacle an artist has to overcome. "Once you've managed to get technique tucked comfortably under your belt, you can get lost in the act of painting," he says. "You no longer penetrate the surface of your work, you become a technician, and you lose track of what you were trying to say."

## THEMES

So just what is Anthony trying to say? He gives us a cheery selection of subjects that go towards inspiring him: "Alienation, isolation, anger aimed inward and outward, love, sacrifice and loss. Those things interest me most." Essentially, these are the ingredients of the human condition; the raw materials of a Sartre novel. "Sometimes I wonder if I'm actually a Russian," muses Anthony, somewhat cryptically. "Or maybe it's the Viking blood in me."

In truth there's not really any need for him to try to explain. These are some of the themes which art has attempted to address since humans first start drawing on the walls of caves. "I'm less interested in blood and thunder than in those things that pull us apart," explains Anthony. "How much of that is a reflection of my own inner turmoil, I'm not sure." ●



**THREADS OF DISLOYALTY**

This is a Magic: the Gathering card, from the Kamigawa Block which was released a couple of years ago," says Anthony.

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## Anthony S. Waters' VITAL STATISTICS

The one-stop-shop for info on Anthony



**Place of birth?**  
Omaha, Nebraska.

**Date of birth?**  
3 January, 1969.

**Current location?**  
Washington State.

**Favourite music?**  
I can't narrow it down to one specific type. I don't care for most mainstream music... it's so overprocessed that listening to it's like eating a candy bar: it temporarily fills the void, but leaves you wanting something truly substantial.

**Favourite traditional artist?**  
John Singer Sargeant. Hands down, full stop.

**Favourite digital artist?**  
Another hard one. Dave McKean wins out, but there are a host of folks who deserve the title.

**First memory?**  
Hard to say. I had a weird nightmare that's stuck with me

since it happened, around age eight or so.

**Most prized possession?**  
The buddha figure my friend John gave me means an awful lot. The lion's tooth I got from my brother means a lot, too.

**Average time spent on each image?**  
It depends on the subject matter and size of the image. I've had some take as little as a few hours. Others, like the big landscapes I did for the Ravnica card set, took 120 hours.

**Any pet hates or phobias?**  
I'm scared of heights if I'm in a building, but I love flying in one- and two-engine planes, especially stunt planes.

**Single most important piece of professional advice?**  
Do what you love. Everything else follows on the heels of that.

**Left or right-handed?**  
I was born right-handed. My mum and grandmum trained me to be a lefty.

**If you were an animal, what would you be?**  
Maned wolf! Unless we're talking mythological creatures, in which case it'd be a dragon. (One of my own design, natch.)

## PAINT LIKE ANTHONY S. WATERS

To paint like Anthony S. Waters, you'll have to first delve into the mind, thought processes and world of the WotC artist. Ready? Turn to page 68 to see a workshop that's like no other before it...



TURN TO PAGE 68



# Joshua James Shaw

From the hallowed corridors of LucasArts to the bustling offices of EA, this artist has done it all...

It really wasn't a conscious decision for me," says Joshua James Shaw, a 25-year-old artist working at EA Mythic, formerly Mythic Entertainment. "If there was something that made marks laying around, I'd put it to use. I remember drawing Fred Flintstone and Ninja Turtles on my father's chicken coop as a child." The passion for making marks has stayed with Joshua, and has led to a successful career as a concept artist.

It's clear that Joshua has a wise head on his young shoulders, and he offers sound advice to anyone wanting to follow his incredible development as a professional artist. "As simple as this may sound," he says "many aspiring artists hold themselves back by not making the conscious decision to round-out their rougher edges. You have to sit back from your work, rub your eyes and pick apart your faults. You have to know how good, and perhaps more importantly how terrible you are. I tell myself these things over and over, whether it shows in my work or not."

It has taken a lot of trial and error for Joshua to get to his amazing job as concept artist at EA Mythic. And one pivotal experience came when he was accepted, during college, for an internship at the mighty LucasArts. "Up until my internship I was always doing work for myself, guided by my own rules and deadlines. And it was an eye-opening experience to test myself against studio deadlines, art direction and technique. I quickly realised that my leisurely way of working for myself was the devastatingly wrong way to prepare for studio production.

"To be a concept artist you basically have to be

able to draw and paint anything from any angle within a given time limit. And if you don't have technique down for handling each type of subject matter you're just putting more weight on your shoulders. I struggled to find what technique best suited the pace I needed to work at. I didn't perform as well as I would have liked at LucasArts, but I gained invaluable info that directed me on the right path."

## PERSONAL OASIS

Today, Joshua is busy creating all manner of characters and environments in his day job. "It can take from one to three days or even a week to create an image, depending on the complexity of the concept," he says. When he's not busy sketching out concepts, Joshua is working on a personal project - a graphic novel called *Fading Oasis* (which you can track the progress of at <http://fadingoasis.blogspot.com>).

"It's easy to find inspiration for the book since there's just so much to do," he laughs. "Writing and concepting alone can engulf your world. Basically I'm doing the book because I like to draw and paint but, more importantly, I like to draw and paint for a

reason. I like to draw a wide range or subjects, and a graphic novel gives me all the chances I would like. It's a story about people's bonds with one another, and the story embodies a full range of emotion from the lightest to the darkest heart. I get excited simply thinking about the story, because as you are creating you yourself get to watch the characters' lives unfold. It's a great feeling to do something I think is worthwhile. It definitely will be the first piece of 'real' Art I have created."

## Artist PROFILE

**Joshua James Shaw**



**AGE:** 25  
**COUNTRY:** VA, USA  
**FAVOURITE ARTISTS:** J.C.

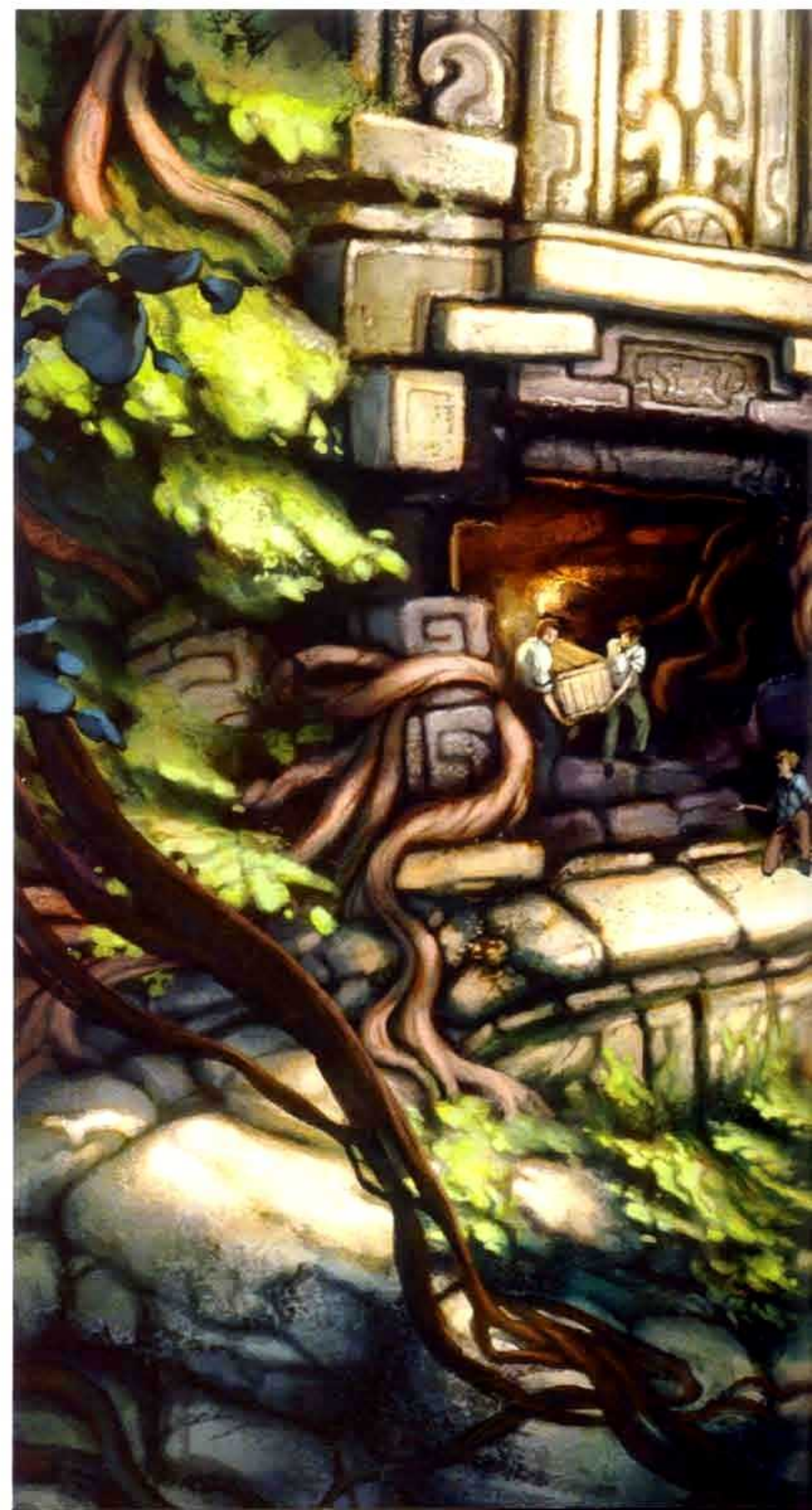
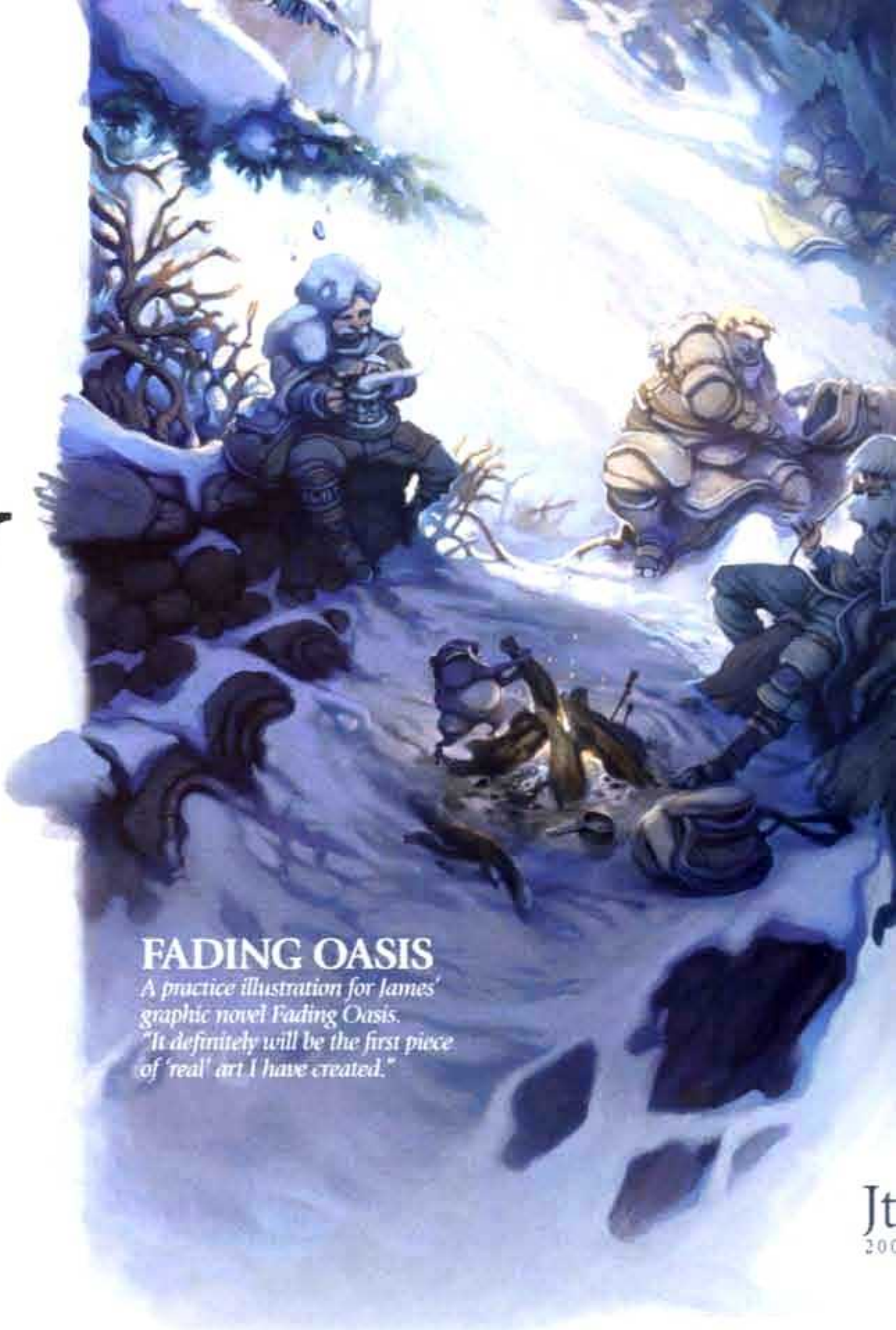
Leyendecker, Sargent, Burton Silverman, Sir Thomas Lawrence, N.C. Wyeth, Norman Rockwell, Dermot Power and, of course, Bruce Lee.

**WEB:**  
[www.joshuathejames.com](http://www.joshuathejames.com)

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[joshuathejames@gmail.com](mailto:joshuathejames@gmail.com)

## FADING OASIS

A practice illustration for James' graphic novel *Fading Oasis*. "It definitely will be the first piece of 'real' art I have created."





# Rising Star Joshua James Shaw



## ZINQUAY

Zinquay is one of several characters Joshua designed for Mythic's Imperator MMPORG project, which was put on indefinite hold last year.

## GOSIN

A first pass at Gosin, a character from Fading Oasis. "It's easy to find inspiration for the book since there's so much to do," he reveals.



## SCOURGE TROOPER

"The Scourge Trooper is another character that I designed for the Imperator project," says Joshua.

## SCORPIOUS TROOPER

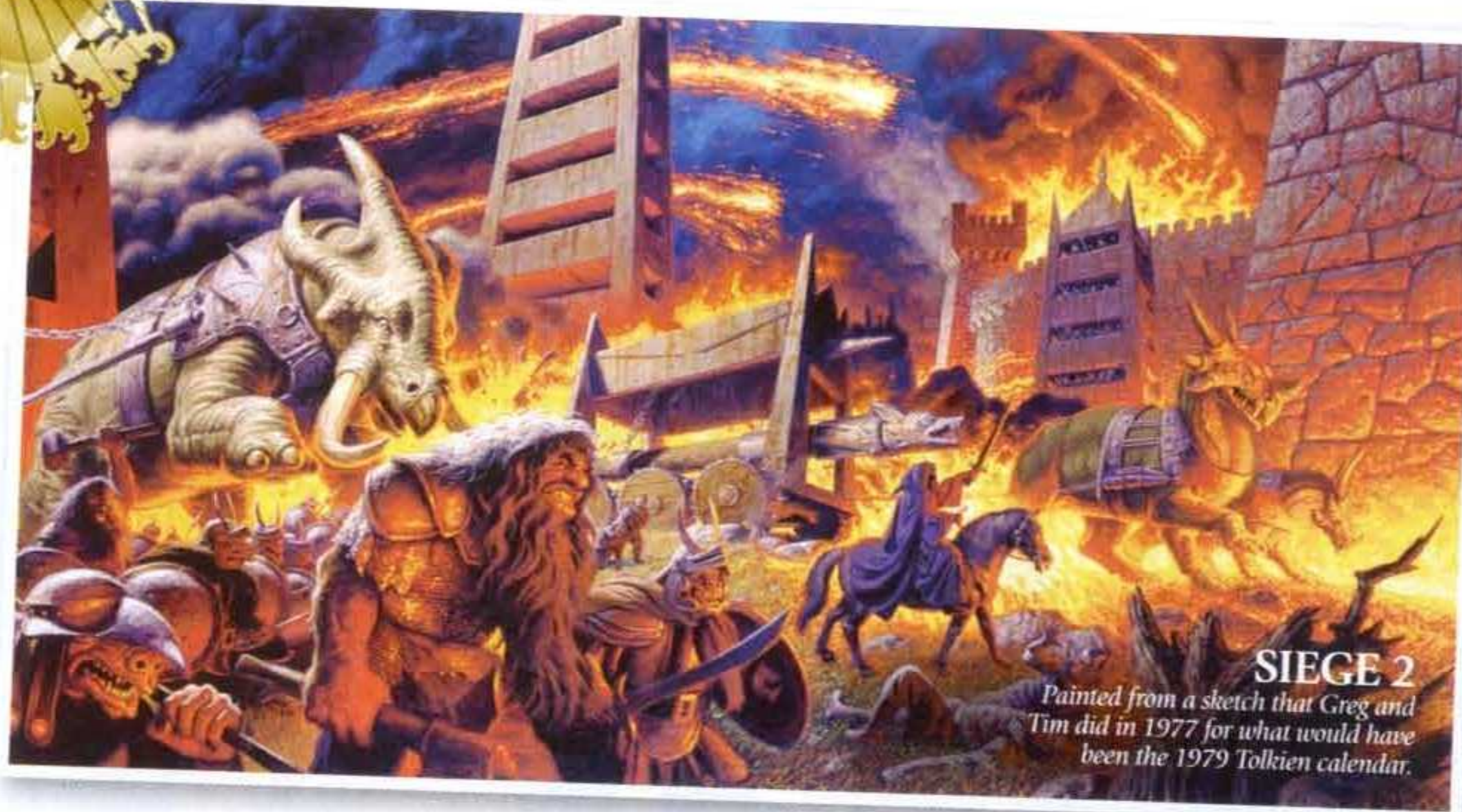
Another design for the Imperator project. Whether EA Games' recent acquisition of Mythic will herald a revival for Imperator remains to be seen.



## INDY

"This is an Indiana Jones-type environment that I created to round-out my portfolio," states Joshua





**SIEGE 2**

Painted from a sketch that Greg and Tim did in 1977 for what would have been the 1979 Tolkien calendar.

# The Brothers Hildebrandt

From Lord of the Rings to Star Wars and beyond, the twins who redefined fantasy imagery for a whole generation...

On 11 June this year, one of the true greats of the fantasy art world passed away, aged 67, from complications due to diabetes. He was Tim Hildebrandt, and together with his twin brother Greg, he created some of the best-known and best-loved art in the genre.

The Brothers Hildebrandt first shot to fame with their illustrations for the 1976 Ballantine calendar of Lord of the Rings, as well as their iconic poster for the original Star Wars. But even by then, they had produced more than 20 years' worth of illustrations for children's books, stop motion animation, and puppet animation.

## WHERE IT ALL STARTED

The twins' fascination with art began, as far as Greg can tell, around the age of two. "We could both remember sitting and eating crayons," he says. "I

think the idea was to decide if colours tasted different..."

In those pre-teen years, their major artistic influence was, of course, comic books: "That was the first stuff that we saw – coming in the front door were the daily and Sunday papers. It was the golden era for comics."

## COMIC BEGINNINGS

The twins began studying and copying these comics, with the growing realisation that this was what they were born to do. And then out of the blue came Disney.

"When we first saw Disney's Pinocchio, we were about six or seven years old, and it was literally the first movie we saw on a big screen. It was like it happened yesterday, and Tim and I were totally blown away. From then on, that was it – whatever it was on that screen, we wanted to do it. The main obsession was to be Disney

animators; it was the single most motivating force of our childhood."

From the very start, the brothers worked as a team, inspiring and challenging each other to try new techniques or discover how something worked – what Greg calls a "push me-pull you thing." But ➔

## Artist PROFILE

### Greg and Tim Hildebrandt



Greg and Tim Hildebrandt began their careers in 1959, and became internationally

known for the original Star Wars movie poster. They have since worked for Marvel Comics, DC Comics, Batfilms and Lucas Films.

WEB: [www.brothershildebrandt.com](http://www.brothershildebrandt.com)



## X-MEN (1996 Fleer card)

"This picture was created as a nine block, cut up into individual cards for the set. It was a tough composition because each part had to stand alone as a separate card," explains Greg.









WILDEBRANDT

## STAR WARS NEW HOPE

Greg and Tim painted this eight days before the release of the first Star Wars Movie. "We asked the art director at the ad agency who the guy in the helmet was. He shrugged and said, 'The man in the iron mask,'" laughs Greg.



“The pair dabbled briefly with oils, until Greg accidentally erased Gandalf’s face because the paint hadn’t dried...”

with no formal art training, they were dismayed to find that a career at Disney was unlikely. Undaunted, stints at the Jam Handy Organisation followed, producing industrial and commercial films which mixed live action with animation in hugely innovative and award-winning ways.

## CATHOLIC TENDENCIES

Perhaps oddly, the next move was working for catholic bishop (and erstwhile TV star) Fulton J Sheen, again producing some innovative documentaries but this time with the emphasis on social awareness. This was a real eye-opener for “two kids from the east side of Detroit”.

In 1969, the brothers set up as commercial illustrators for children’s books, and for the next six years would produce a vast output of work. “We had a system by this time; we could just crank it out,” Greg explains. “There’s so much work that Tim did in these kids’ books that is unknown. It probably had a subconscious influence on their readers. He was really incredible at that, he loved doing it and did a fantastic job.” Ironically, some of these once-obscure books are now changing hands for impressive sums of money.

But it was the Tolkien calendars that changed everything, and that



## BLACK CAT

Cover painting Issue #1 Lorne-Harvey, 1995: “I like the combination of black and white, and colour. It separates the past from the present.”

was almost by accident. Publishers Ballantine Books had appealed on the back of a calendar for artists to illustrate a Lord of the Rings edition.

## THE ONE RING

“And yet,” says Greg, “when we got [to the publishers], the only responses they’d had were from fan artists – there were no professionals. Imagine if you did that today...! Fantasy art was still this kind of kitsch sub-genre, people looked down their noses at it. People were reading it secretly, and artists were the same – they disdained this genre.”

The illustrations were huge, six feet wide canvases, created by one ➡



## BOBA FETT

From Star Wars Shadows Of The Empire 1996 Card Set: “Tim and I completed this painting even faster than it took us to paint the original Star Wars poster, in just under two days! Sometimes that happens when you really love the piece you are working on,” says Greg.

## A NEW HOPE

The Hildebrandts’ Star Wars poster is a modern classic

The brothers’ illustration for the original Star Wars poster – eventually used for the film’s re-release – is almost as iconic as their Lord of the Rings illustrations, but also occurred almost by luck.

Being big Mel Brooks and monster film fans, the pair had originally designed, overnight, an on-spec poster for Young Frankenstein which was ultimately too late for production. “So once we’d done the Rings calendars, the publishers remembered that and called us, because they needed this poster for Star Wars fast,” explains Greg. “George Lucas apparently didn’t like the original – he wanted something more comic-booky, he said.”

Knowing almost nothing about the film – as few people did before its release – the brothers worked in shifts for 36 hours to produce the poster. “That jammed us to another level of involvement and fame,” says Greg.

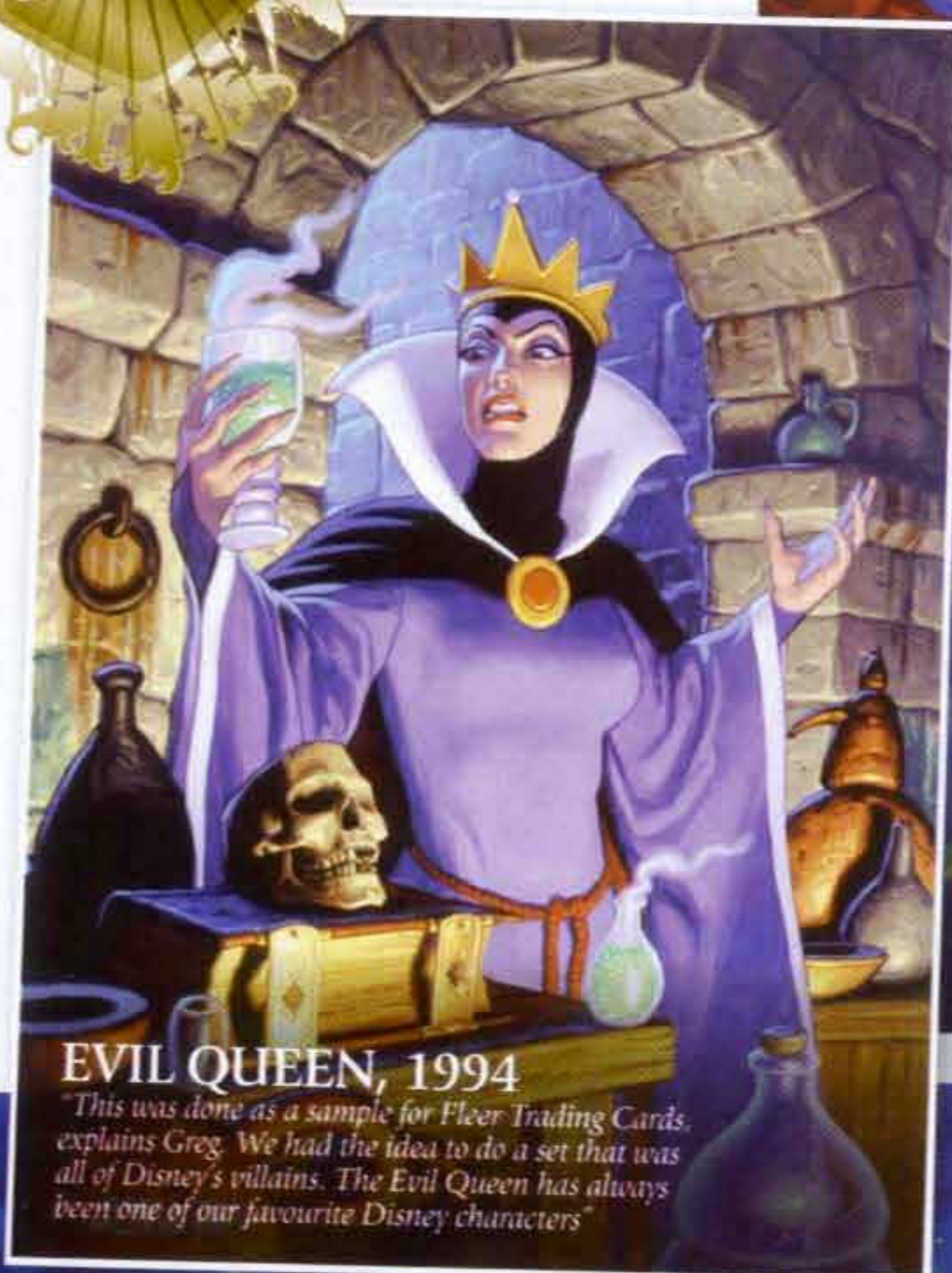
Yet this fame didn’t faze them – quite the opposite. “The impossible is a bigger challenge and that doesn’t go away the older I get,” Greg continues. “It didn’t go away for Tim either. If you know you’ve got it knocked from the beginning, what the hell is the point of doing it? You want to be an explorer.”



## SPIDER-MAN, 1994

Greg reveals this was “for a Marvel poster, to show Spiderman’s new costume.”





### EVIL QUEEN, 1994

"This was done as a sample for Fleece Trading Cards," explains Greg. "We had the idea to do a set that was all of Disney's villains. The Evil Queen has always been one of our favourite Disney characters."



### NIGHT ON BALL MOUNTAIN, 1994

Second sample painting for Disney villains. "This sequence in Fantasia is our favourite piece of animation. This is a great villain, designed by Kay Neilsen, a Danish children's books illustrator."



### SUPERMAN

Graphic Novel, 1998: Last Goddess of Krypton. "It was a thrill doing Superman. We've been fans since 1945, when we made our own Superman costumes," remembers Greg.

"I don't know if either of us would have made it if we weren't twins. I'm amazed by any artist as an individual who manages to complete anything"

brother starting at either end and working towards the middle, where their creations would meet. Somewhat to the Hildebrandts' surprise, they were an instant hit, and the pair were bemused to suddenly find themselves receiving fan letters.

### FAME BECKONS

"When this happened we just weren't really getting it. I was always in awe of this stuff and I still am – I'm a fanboy myself. When you start going to conventions and see people lining up to meet you, that's a thrill. So we did three of them overall... the 1978 edition sold over a million."

Their new-found fame led to them being commissioned for the poster for a low-budget sci-fi film called Star Wars (see A New Hope), and that sealed the deal. The brothers Hildebrandt were officially in demand, and from then to the present day, they worked almost continuously on a bewildering number of projects: film posters, greeting cards, collectable card games, Marvel and DC Comics, ads, Dungeons & Dragons, more calendars, more Star Wars books, more of everything...

"I don't know if either of us would have made it if we weren't twins," muses Greg. "I'm amazed by any artist as an individual who manages to

complete anything. In the early days we used to have these constant freak outs, throw it all in a corner and just scream 'I quit' and go rampaging off. Then the other one would say, 'well unless you get back in here, I'm quitting too' – and that would be it."

Now, Greg says he has no plans to slow down, but says he's unlikely to switch to digital production after a while. Tim's favoured medium was watercolour – "He was a master at that" – and the pair dabbled briefly with oils, until Greg accidentally erased Gandalf's face with his hand because the paint still hadn't dried. That was the last stroke, in many senses.


### DIGITAL DILEMMA

"I like the physical aspect of real painting," Greg explains. "When my mind goes to digital, it's like, 'where is it?' I don't know how to turn on a computer – and I mean that literally. But I'm blown away with digital stuff, it's incredible what people do with it."

For Greg and Tim, art had always been a calling, not a vocation. "There was never a question of doing anything else. We've always said art chose us, we didn't choose it. We were never interested in anything else."

"And I know Tim's with me. He'll always be with me."





# *Artist portfolio* **VIKTOR TITOV**

Meet the hamster obsessed Russian artist who combines a passion for traditional landscape and epic drama in his work...

## **ART IS IMMORTAL**

Another competition entry, this time to Russian site CGTALK, Art is Immortal shows the moment when the crew of spaceship lands on a planet and discovers the Venus di Milo.



## FINAL BATTLE

One of Viktor's most ambitious works, this epic scene was an entry for a competition to design a poster for the fantasy game *Heroes of Might and Magic*.



Hamsters are always in my head. They even follow me in my sleep," jokes Viktor Titov. It's an odd confession, but there's nothing untoward about the young Russian's preoccupation with capaciously cheeked rodents. Hamsters are a recurring theme throughout Viktor's artwork and when they're not at its centre, they can often be found lurking in the background. "If you look at all my work you can always find one little hamster in there," he confides.

As you might have guessed Viktor has a devious sense of humour and he brings it to the digital canvas. "There are some funny and amusing moments in life," he says. "It's great if you manage to perceive the humour, and if you use it in your work that is wonderful, too."

While some of Viktor's subjects might have a lightness of touch, it's clear that he takes his painting seriously. Despite his age (he's only 22) he has a mature painting style reminiscent of fantasy art master, Todd Lockwood (see page 26 for Todd's column).

Viktor started his career at a youthful age attending a children's art school and went on to study art at graduate level in Russia, working using traditional media, pencil and paper, and oil and canvas.

Viktor cites the work of classic Russian artists such as Fyodor Vasilyev and Isaac Levitan in addition to impressionists Degas, Monet, and Renoir as influences on his style. And you may well notice that his rendering of skies recall their romanticised pastoral scenes.

"I love all landscape painters, Vereshagin, Van Gough, John Constable, Alfred Sisley," he explains. "These artists have affected my perception of painting. I have understood many things while examining their remarkable works. When I studied, I thought that I would only draw landscapes for the rest of my life."

He advises that artists should be mindful of their influences. "Learn from the best," he says. "Look, observe and notice in works of known masters what distinguishes them and what makes them unique to develop your style."

## Artist PROFILE

### Viktor Titov



**AGE:** 22

**COUNTRY:** Russia

**FAVOURITE**

**ARTISTS:** Russian

landscapers: Levitan, Vasilyev,

Shishkin. Impressionists:

Degas, Monet, Renoir and

Gerald Brom, Dusso,

Gottfried Helnwein

**FAVOURITE DIGITAL**

**ARTISTS:** Linda Bergkvist,

Erwin Olaf, Craig Mullins

**SOFTWARE USED:**

Photoshop, Painter, ArtRage

**AVERAGE TIME PER IMAGE:**

Five to six hours for quick

sketches. Longer for

competition entries.

**WEB:** <http://hamsterfly.cgsociety.org>

**EMAIL:**

viktortitov@yahoo.com

"If you look at all my work, you can always find at least one little hamster in there"



➔ Contrasting those tranquil scenes Viktor shows a flair for the epic drama of the fantasy genre. In images such as Dragon Crash and Final Battle, Viktor's style exhibits some of the dynamism of contemporary digital artists such as Craig Mullins, who contrast roughly sketched areas painted with quick strokes against more considered detail work. It's a process he describes as being something of a balancing act.

"I don't have enough time to work over all the details," he explains. "Sometimes I feel I have to leave vivid touches and dabs. I may spend a lot of time trying to emphasise some details and then rub them off because they're too obsessive and they occupy the central part of the composition."

The little flourishes, glows and bursts of light add to the dramatic effect, but Viktor tries to keep these elements to a minimum: "I like some experiments with colour palettes, but I have been concerned about too much colour in my work. I have a desire to draw something tender and not bright," he confesses.

Viktor works predominantly in Photoshop, using a collection of his custom brushes as well as the preset tools. He also praises Ambient Design's natural media package ArtRage, which he uses to imitate oil paints. "It's so simple and unpretentious," he enthuses. "But it's the only package that can imitate real painting well."

"Real painting" is where Viktor developed most of his core skills, the move to digital painting came relatively recently: "I took up digital painting only a year and a half ago. I was inspired by a contest held at the Russian site, [cgtalk.ru](http://cgtalk.ru)," he explains. "I won the first prize, which was a good stimulus to go on studying digital painting."

## A VIVID IMAGINATION

Inspiration for Viktor's work comes in part from a childhood spent enthusiastically reading and drawing science fiction, though he chooses now to concentrate on technical literature to sharpen his skills. He also professes to being a big cartoon fan as well and has a big collection at home, which he describes as "enriching".

As a student Viktor worked for a games company in Russia as a character animator as part of a character development team. Although an avid gamer, he's particularly vocal on the subject.

"Video games are EVIL," he insists. "They take a lot of time and then you feel as if you spent a part of your life in vain. But games are sometimes useful if they make you think, understand and realise some ideas and get fresh impressions."

In Viktor's current job he works on 3D and broadcast graphics for advertising and

music videos, a career path that has increasingly taken him away from his first passion, painting. "I like my job, but as I enjoyed drawing from childhood I feel that my job takes a lot of time and I have less time for painting," he moans. "Now I seriously wonder whether it's necessary to continue the same way or to devote all my time to CG and traditional painting?"

Ideally, Viktor wants to develop his digital painting skills as part of his day job, though he recognises openings for specialised CG artists are sparse. "I'd like to try working in the book illustration sphere, illustrating fiction and fairy tales. I want to obtain new skills and learn something new, take part in the contests and create my own style."

For Viktor, this long process of self-development is the key to achieving success in digital art. He explains things further: "Always try to learn and rise up the ladder of skill with each new piece of work. If you have aimed to become a good artist, do not stop halfway through." ●

# CRASHED AND BURNED

## The story of Dragon Crash

Much of Viktor's work is created in response to competition briefs set at community sites such as CGSociety. For him, the motivation is not the winning, but the opportunity to test out his skills. "It is certainly interesting to take part in competitions that have good prizes," he explains. "But it's also very important to me that the competition has an interesting and fascinating theme..."

For the Spectacular 2D Challenge 2005 the brief was simple and succinct. "To portray something that is truly a spectacle - something both extraordinary, but within the realm of possibility. A once in a lifetime event."

Dragon Crash began with rough pencil sketches posted on the CGSociety site for feedback and some paintings developed in response to comments from forum members. "The main idea was the feeling of tremendous speed and the fascination of flight on a dragon," he says. "Later I decided to drop a dragon on a lawn and I thought up the idea for those fearless hamsters, successfully attacking a dragon."

Though the final piece wasn't an overall winner, Viktor is philosophical: "Whether I won or not had no value. It's more important that I gained a lot of experience and response about my work from people worldwide."



**PLUS!**  
Create images  
like Viktor...  
workshop starts  
on page 94

## HEAVY CAVALRY

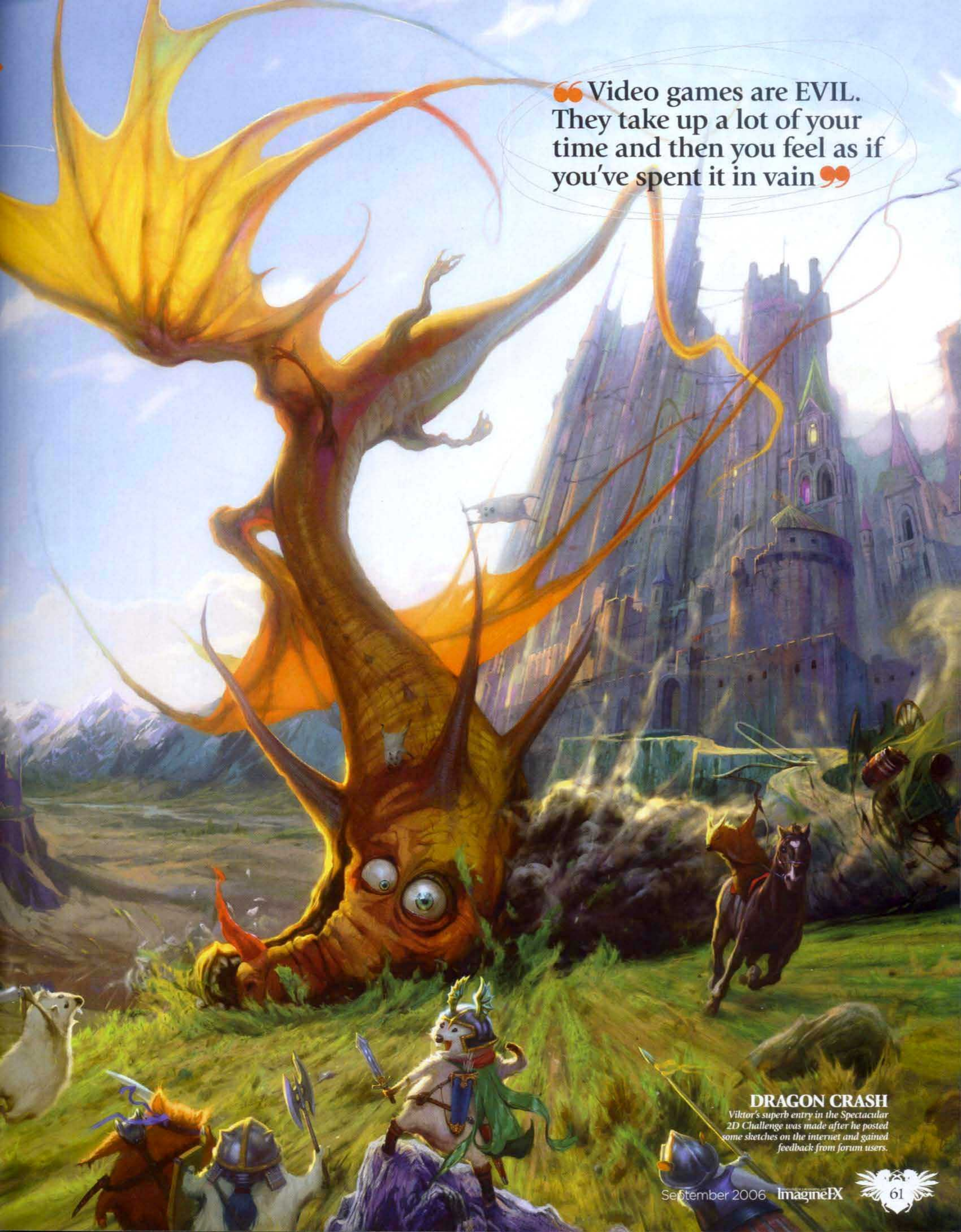
This piece shows Viktor's talent for lighting, with the bright flourishes reflected in the knight's visor.

## BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Beauty and the Beast shows some of Viktor's trademark features in the detailed foreground elements and rich skies.







“Video games are EVIL.  
They take up a lot of your  
time and then you feel as if  
you’ve spent it in vain”

### DRAGON CRASH

Viktor's superb entry in the Spectacular 2D Challenge was made after he posted some sketches on the internet and gained feedback from forum users.



# EXPosé<sup>Pro</sup>

SHOWCASING PROFESSIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

## Ales 'Artie' Horak

**LOCATION:** Czech Republic

**WEB:** <http://artie.clone.cz>

**EMAIL:** artie@clone.cz

**SOFTWARE:** Photoshop

**JOB:** Lead artist



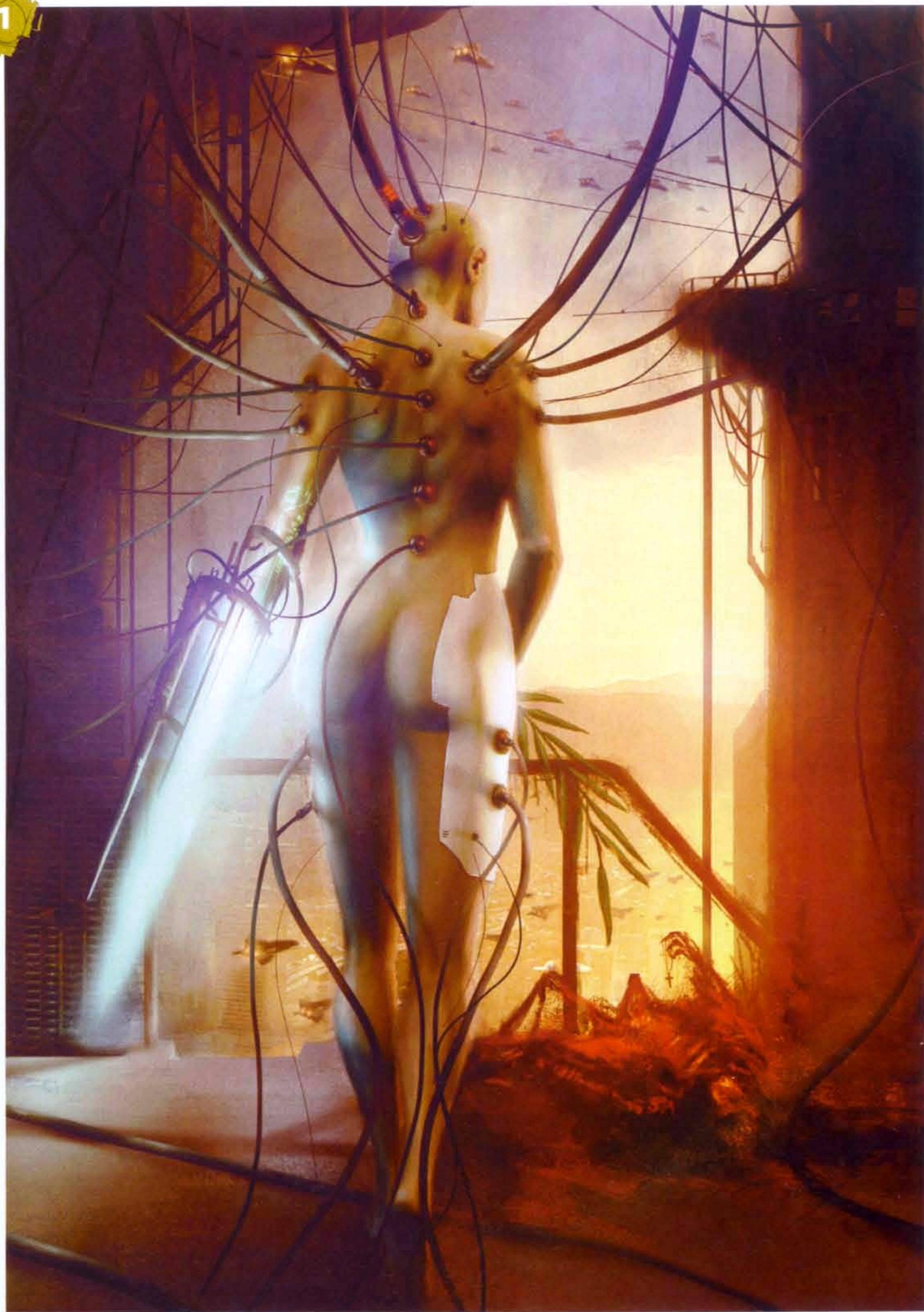
Currently working as a lead artist in the game development company, from an early age Artie was fascinated by the work of fantasy giants like Boris Vallejo and Frank Frazetta. "It led me to be interested in painting and imaginary worlds," he says.

With this strong source of inspiration Artie had to paint: "My first steps were taken with a pencil and later on the ZX Spectrum." There wasn't a mouse or tablet, of course: "It was a really amusing experience, though somewhat hardcore," he remembers.

But the clock was ticking, and many other artists and influences appeared, marking the development of the genre. "I am constantly trying to enhance my imagination and how to represent it," says Artie. "My main goal is to become a better artist."

**1 DIES IRAE** With this piece, Artie is asking questions about the nature of good and evil: "Can the machines take the role of the neo-angels, eliminating the evil? And who is behind them - the man acting like the God?" asks Artie.

**2 WYRMHOLE** The young warrior from a nearby Aquian village meets his opponent. Artie takes up the story: "There is no easy way to defeat a wyrm, but it must be done..."



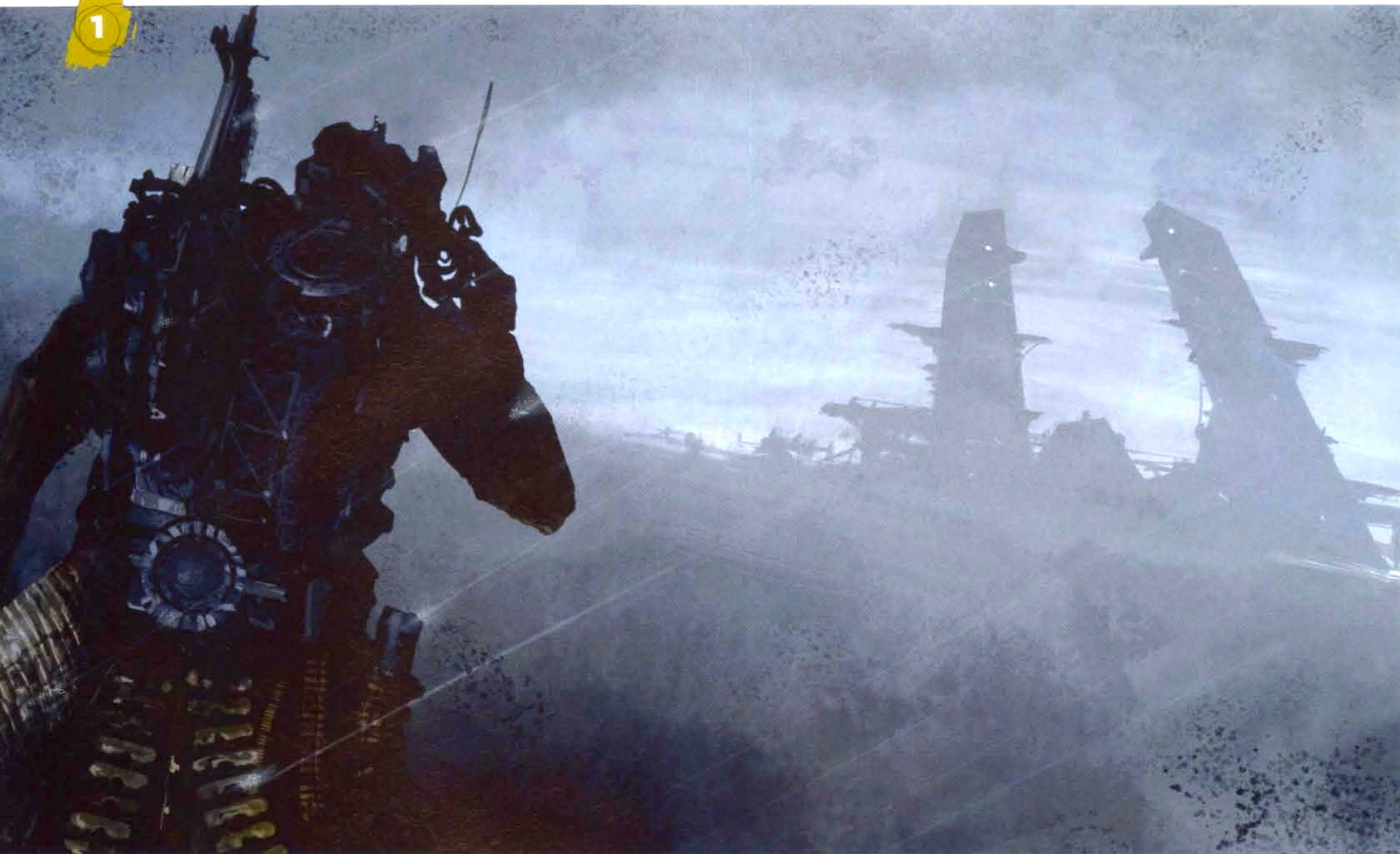


2





1



## + Kan Muftic

**LOCATION:** Switzerland  
**WEB:** [www.streamatica.ch](http://www.streamatica.ch)  
**EMAIL:** [info@streamatica.ch](mailto:info@streamatica.ch)  
**SOFTWARE:** Photoshop CS  
**JOB:** Concept artist



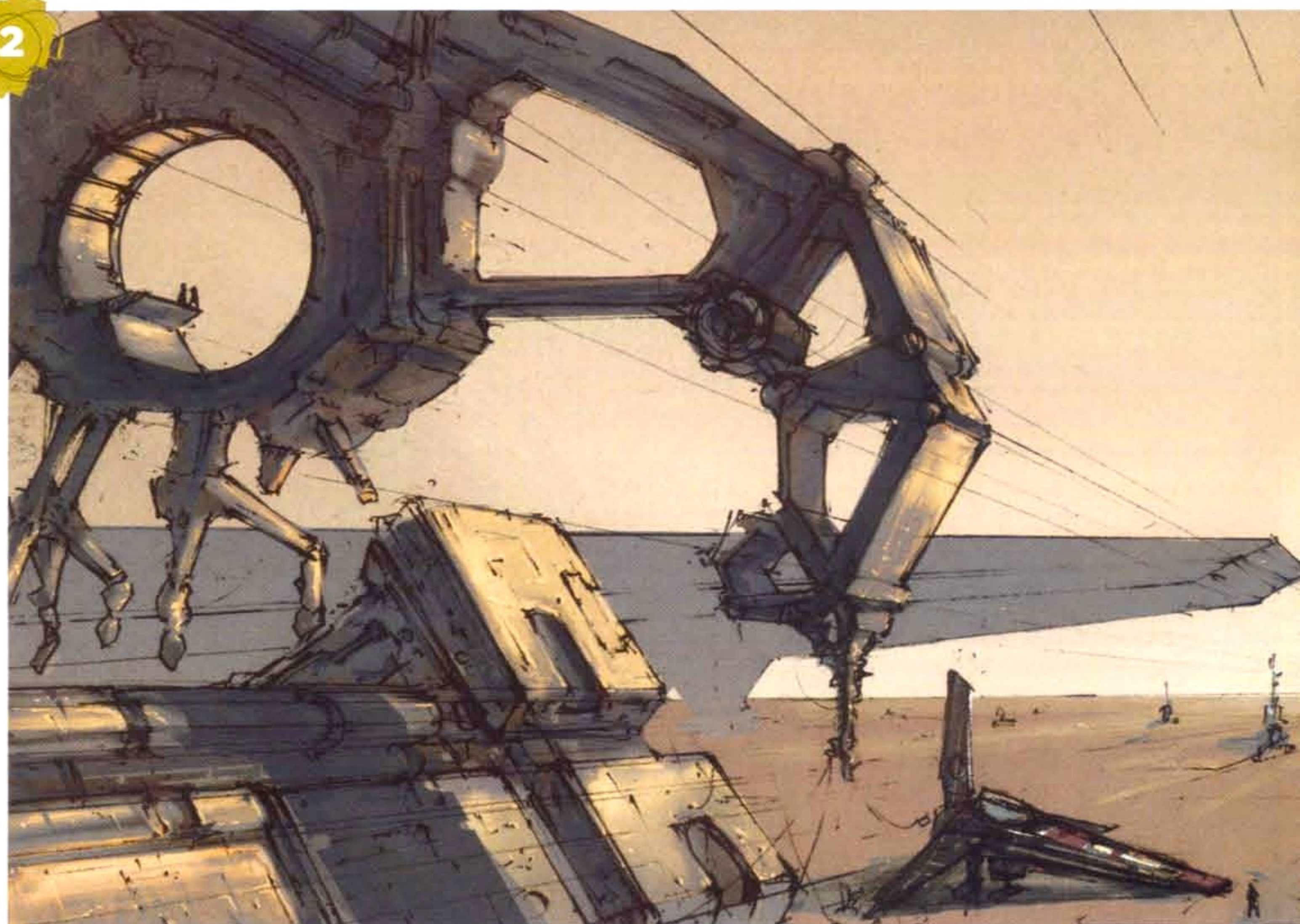
"I was born in Sarajevo, Bosnia in 1976," says Kan. "And before moving to Zürich I studied draughtsmanship at the city's school of fine arts." Once in Switzerland Kan continued his studies, majoring in contemporary art and new media. "I now specialise in direction, art direction, music design, compositing and motion graphics."

Kan has worked for clients such as Microsoft, Philips, Pepsi and FIFA. "I have also provided art for various local and international musicians such as Alanis Morissette, Asian Dub Foundation and DJ Bobo."

**1 SCOUT** After couple of minutes of brainstorming Kan had the picture in his mind: "A cold, unfriendly environment and some kind of a soldier who's looking to a distant enemy base."

**2 AIRPORT** "When I create high-tech environments" says Kan, "I prefer starting on a paper, with rulers, erasers and very light pencils."

2





## + David Freeman

**LOCATION:** England

**WEB:** [www.pixelsandpotions.com](http://www.pixelsandpotions.com)

**EMAIL:** [dave@pixelsandpotions.com](mailto:dave@pixelsandpotions.com)

**SOFTWARE:** Painter 8, Photoshop CS

**JOB:** Design director, concept artist, illustrator



Inspired by such names as Saul Bass, Sid Mead and Ralph Macquarie "I've been creating both digital and traditional artwork for years" says David. But it wasn't till 2004 that David took the plunge and became a concept artist.

"While working as a broadcast designer at the BBC I by chance attended a seminar by the ILM art department who had recently completed *Star Wars Episode II*." This didn't just make David rethink his working practice "but also, what I wanted to do as a career."

When the BBC closed its design department in 2004, David used this opportunity to start working as a concept artist. Creating his first true piece of digital painting for one of the CG Talk challenges, "I've since worked on a variety of jobs including features, commercials, posters and music promos as an illustrator, concept and storyboard artist along with the odd bit of matte painting thrown into the mix."

**1 THE EXPERIMENT** In this vision of the future, nanotechnology has become the norm. "Here, a young boy has converted his pet fish into a living home computer. Part machine and part fish, upgrades can be bought from the local pet shop," muses David.

**2 PILGRIMAGE** This young boy arrives at a sacred site central of his religious beliefs: "Temples have been built high in the mountains overlooking the site of an ancient space craft, thought to be the origins of life on the planet," he says. ●

1

2



On the disc

# Your DVD

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Learning about the human form is paramount to an artist, that's why we've secured five free Modelalisa life drawing poses for the DVD. You can find these files within the Joel Carlo workshop, make sure to come back next month for even more.

Starting this month we're also including our entire back catalogue of resources on the DVD, you can find all the free images, textures, fonts and brushes ever featured in the relevant archive folders.

As usual we have a brilliant selection of useable workshop files plus another great FXPose filled with your artwork. Enjoy.

*Tom*  
**Tom Rudderham,**  
DVD Editor

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US readers please turn to page 73

### Contact details

Want to send us feedback? Like to see your artwork or software on this DVD? Contact us using the details below...

**Reader artwork:** fxpose@imaginefx.com

**Email the DVD editor:** Tom Rudderham, tom@imaginefx.com

**Postal address:** ImagineFX magazine, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

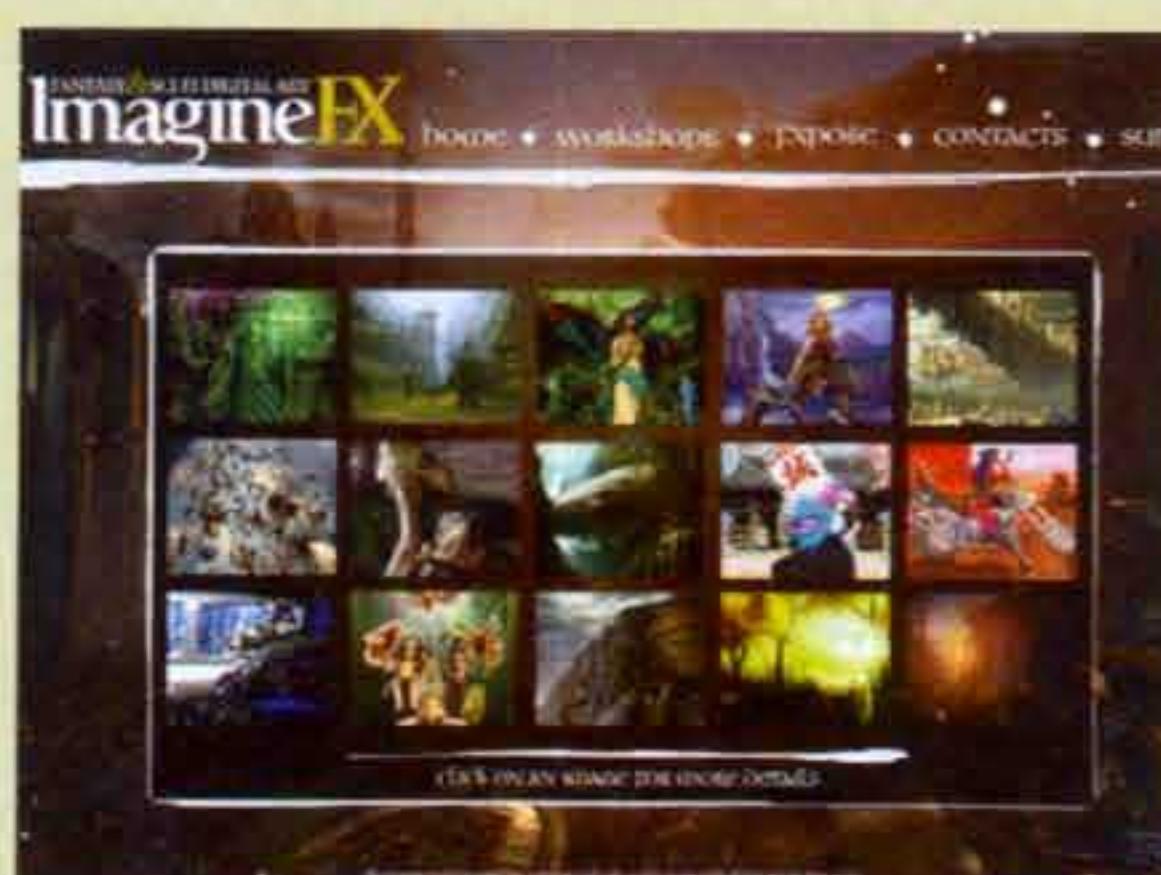
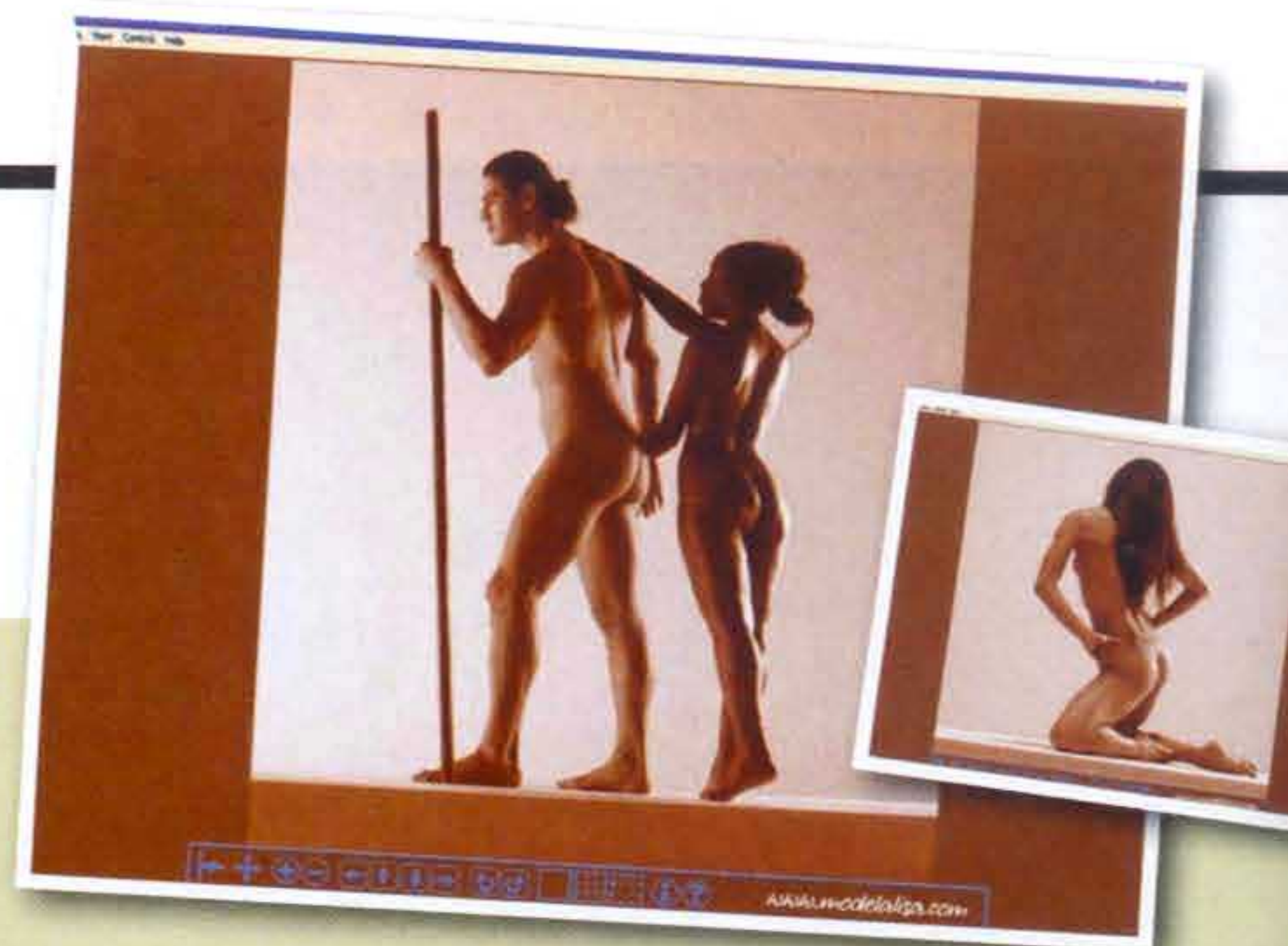
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- Photoshop CS2 (Mac and PC)
- PD Pro 3.5 (PC only)
- Poser 6 (Mac and PC)
- Painter IX.5 (Mac and PC)
- NaturePainter
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- High-res, multi-layered artwork from professional digital artists. See individual workshop pages for files and folders

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**28**  
PAGES OF  
TUITION

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

# ImagineFX Workshops

The software and files you need to complete this month's workshops...

## This issue:

### **68 Fuel your imagination**

Anthony S. Waters reveals the thinking behind his artwork in an unmissable workshop

### **74 Freestyle character design**

Neville Page takes time out from James Cameron's latest film to reveal his techniques

### **80 Spotlight**

Henning Ludvigsen picks his favourite digital image of the month and explains why it works

### **82 20 new rules of composition**

How to always get the best composition in your artwork. Gary Tonge reveals all

### **88 Mixed media & experiments**

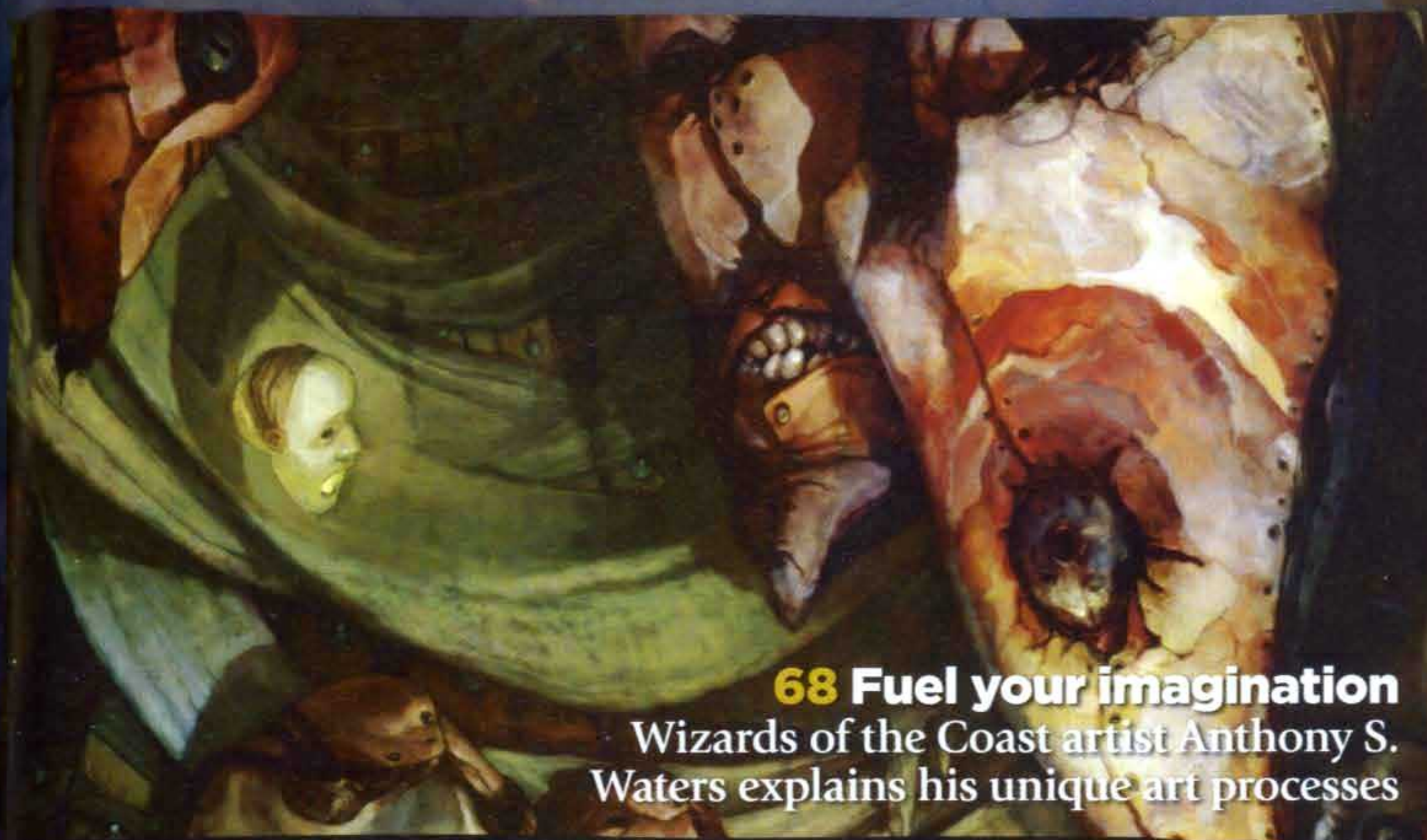
Jonny Duddle combines Painter and Photoshop to create a stunning Chimpski image

### **94 Creating a battle scene**

Using Photoshop and ArtRage, Viktor Titov explains how he paints an epic battle scene

### **98 Figure drawing tips**

Get the five free poses on the DVD and follow Joel Carlo's advice on figure drawing



### **68 Fuel your imagination**

Wizards of the Coast artist Anthony S. Waters explains his unique art processes



### **74 Freestyle character design**

Hollywood concept artist Neville Page reveals how he creates characters



### **82 20 rules of composition**

Gary Tonge dishes out some unmissable advice on creating the best compositions

If your DVD is missing please consult your newsagent





*Photoshop*

# FUEL YOUR IMAGINATION

## Artist PROFILE

**Anthony S. Waters**

**COUNTRY:** US

**CLIENTS:** Wizards of the Coast, Electronic Arts, Lucasfilm, Hasbro



Anthony is a freelance concept designer. "I revel in the

manic generation of ideas," he says.

[www.thinktankstudios.com](http://www.thinktankstudios.com)

## DVD Assets

The files you need are on the DVD

**FILES:** Cropd.psd, GW Wrkng 01.psd

**FOLDERS:** Colour tests

**SOFTWARE:**

Photoshop CS2 (Demo)

We delve into the mind of **Anthony S. Waters** as he creates a personal piece of art called *The Grief Well*

One thing I love doing is making use of the textures from found objects. It's the best excuse I've yet found for collecting weird stuff. You need to be careful of course, so you don't scratch your scanner glass. I recommend building a small box frame out of paper

to place over large objects when you scan them. It's not absolutely necessary, but it does help if you're after the best scan.

Sometimes, though, an unadulterated first-pass scan of an object will present you with possibilities every bit as interesting as a colour-corrected version of the same thing. Photos of scanned

textures provide great image fodder as well. I'm far from the first guy to think of doing this, but I've got my own wacky take on it, and that's what I'm going to discuss here. (I'll also spend some time talking about where this workshop image came from, and what I had in mind when I crafted it.)



In depth Fuel your imagination





## ➔ ROLE WITH IT

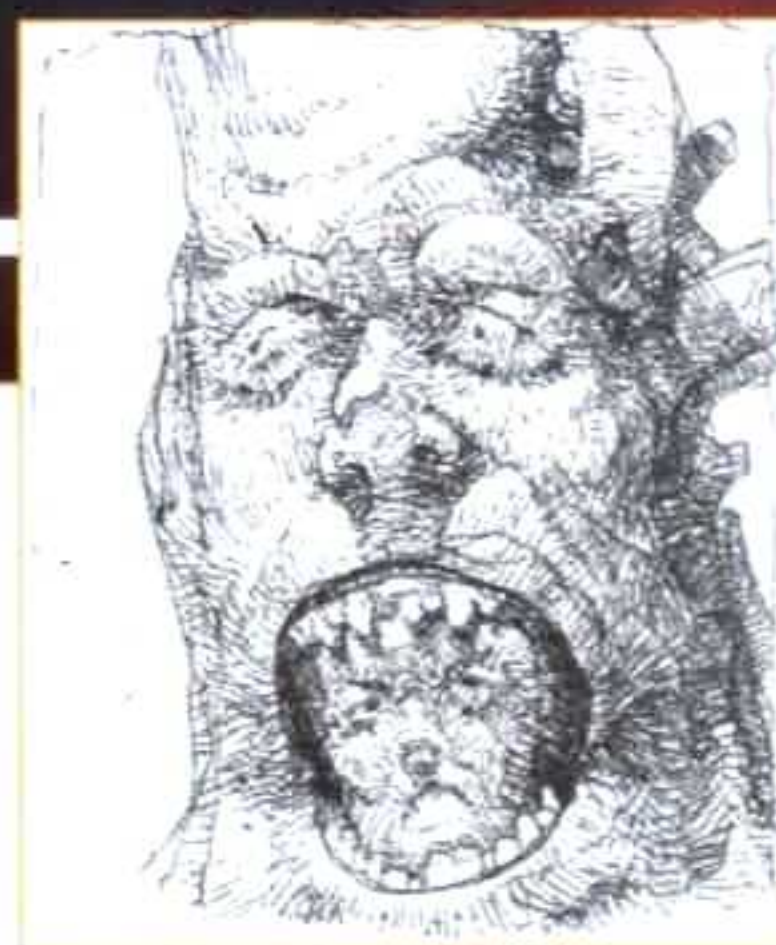
The Grief Well is a piece with very specific meaning for me. I've been doing a lot of mental excavation lately, going through my psyche and drawing what I find. ImagineFX came along and gave me a golden opportunity to take some of these visual explorations to a higher degree of finish. You rarely get the chance to make so personal a statement in the professional world. Jump at them when they come round that mountain, hoss.

One idea in particular has been stuck in my head ever since I first saw it. There's a moment in Akira Kurosawa's film *Red Beard* when several of the characters are calling "Chobo" into the mouth of a well. Chobo is the name of a young boy. The boy is dying. He and his and his entire family have swallowed poison. There's a superstition in Japan that wells go all the way to the Underworld. If you shout a loved one's name down a well, you might be able to bring them back from the dead. As the final shot fades out, the boy's best

friend and her co-workers can be seen in the reflection of the well-water, crying the boy's name.

The idea that wells are a conduit to the Underworld wouldn't leave me alone. I decided I'd do an image based on that idea for this workshop. The Grief Well is partly intended as a gift to you, the reader, should you be interested in the technical side of my work. It's also meant to be an encouragement to not shy away from the scariest spaces inside your head – the personal ones that conceal the roots of our phobias, our fears, quirks and warts – but to use your own experiences actively, as fuel for your imagery. Work that has a strong resonance with the observer inevitably touches on deeper cords than surficial things like technical chops. Good art has something to say. The more an image makes a viewer think, the more of a little miracle you've made.

Now for the symbology of the piece. I believe everyone's got a vocabulary for their own feelings, idiosyncratic and



### SELF PORTRAIT 2

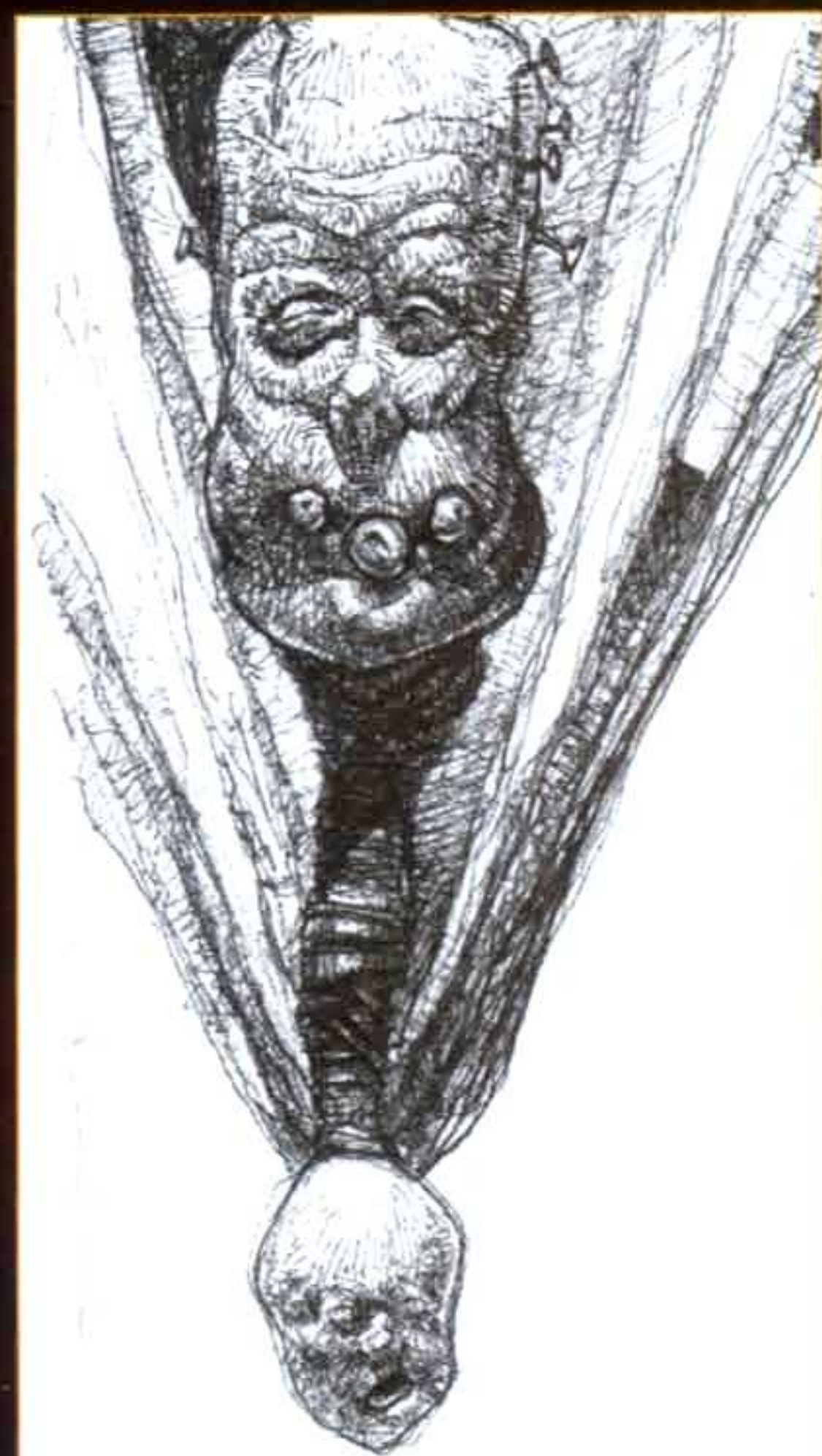
"My own darkest feelings have taken on many guises," muses Anthony.



### SELF PORTRAIT 3

"I use my extensive knowledge of history, biology, geology, archaeology, anthropology and astronomy to push an idea past the threshold of the ordinary," reveals Anthony.

“Don't shy away from the scariest spaces in your head – the ones that conceal the roots of our phobias, fears and quirks”



### SELF PORTRAIT 1

Anthony used his self portraits as a basis for his drawings of *The Grief Well*.



highly specific. I've seen it manifest in dozens of ways. Some people I know use invented characters as visual surrogates, draining a surplus of emotion through sketches of their character either experiencing the same feelings or acting out in ways they can't. Others carve totems, make dolls, write music and so on. My own darkest feelings have taken on many guises but in my adult years the most common forms are desiccated figures bound in mummy wrappings or busts made of stone, bound in leather, mouths sealed with metal bolts like sadistic Easter Island Moai. Recently a new form of bust has appeared, more kid-sized and shaped. I decided I needed to do a piece that combined the interaction of the older, more adult-scale busts with this new young 'uns bust, in the context of a well... at least, what would pass for a well in this weird dream-state where the busts exist. Some form of conversation is happening in my head. That's what I wanted to illustrate.

### ROUGH SKETCHES

Anthony has provided two rough sketches of *The Grief Well*, these sketches are done before the underpainting.



## COLOUR VARIANT 01

This colour test incorporates four different texture scans that Anthony found and meticulously documented on his travels.



## THUMBNAILED

I often start my images as thumbnails (small, as the name implies). It keeps me thinking solely in terms of big shapes, value, temperature and focus. Colour's a major weapon in your arsenal. Warm colours not only advance, they often favour the depiction of strong emotion (anger, jealousy, lust, hate, joy). Cool colours lend themselves to the quieter feelings (melancholy, regret, despair, affection, boredom). Colour's not the only factor, of course. Composition also plays a crucial role. If you think of an image as a gravity well (See? There's that idea of the well again), then the centre of focus is at the bottom. It's the thing that will keep a person interested in your picture. Like the sun, it sets your subject in motion and keeps the dynamic going. Camera angle and perspective also play a role. Figures looming over the viewer can imply repression. Forms in flight are often associated with freedom. I could go on and on. Better to stick with colour and suggest that, for the other stuff, you check out some Jungian Psychological texts.

## GLOBAL TEXTURES

I came up with three differing colour schemes for The Grief Well. As is often the case with me, I realised later what the emotional energy was behind each of them, and that awareness guided me to my final choice. I was still playing at this point, however. That's where scanned textures come in. In Colour Variant 01 I've imported a scan of some gessoed board stained with coffee plus photos of the bark from a tree in Singapore, a stone block from Prague and a plate of rusty metal from near the US/Canada border.

Each is on its own layer, set to a variety of effects (Colour, Hard Light, Colour Burn, Saturation). You often hear about "happy accidents" in painting. It's a misnomer in a way, since you eventually learn to create the circumstances under which those happy accidents occur. The same can be said of digital art, and this method of layering and shaping textures from found objects is how I do it. Don't think in linear terms. A leaf, when played off against other surfaces using the layer settings functions in Photoshop, can become a great foundation for skin. I've used seashells for skies, hunks of galena for stars, even my own skin as the basis of bizarre pavestones. I took this sort of visual cooking one step further and began combining the variants with each other before finally tightening up the forms a little and calling them finished.



## COLOUR VARIANTS 03 & 04

Anthony tried out three colour schemes for The Grief Well. He believes there is "emotional energy" behind each colour.



## STEP-BY-STEP

### 1 Computer headaches

At the start I have my final underdrawing scanned in and ready to go. (For the sake of expediency I've skipped the sketching work I did to get here.) I turn off Image Sampling on the Image Size dialog box and reduce the DPI to 72. It's worth doing if you're using Photoshop, since doing so takes one more thing off the list of processing headaches for your computer (your screen being 72 DPI by default). Turning Image Sampling off just changes the ratio of pixels to increments of measurement. It won't change your image.

### 2 Just say no

Next I go into Channels, click the selection button (that little dashed circle at the bottom-left of the Channels palette, which puts marching ants around a significant hunk of the grey values of my underdrawing). Next I invert my selection, then copy and paste that selection onto a separate layer. I do this to preserve my linework in a more detailed fashion than just setting the layer to Multiply. Do this before converting the







image to CMYK, by the way, (and don't flatten the image when the dialog box pops up, asking if you want to. Trust me, you don't).

## 3 Ignore the happy

I import all three completed thumbnails and place them on separate layers, since at this stage I can't make up my mind which to use. Colour Variant 04 (see page 71) attracts me the most at first. That golden light falling on the largest of the Moai implies an opening above (which has some good connotations) and the warmth makes me think of resolution and happy touchy-feely stuff. But it overpowers the screaming head. Gradually I come to accept that I don't think that mood fits. Instead I go for the scheme in Colour Variant 01, which makes a much more somber, claustrophobic statement.

## 4 Mistake in the middle

Having decided on a colour scheme I place the layer of separated greys over it, set it to Overlay, create a Painting Layer, and get to work. Since I'd solidified my value range at the thumbnail level, all that is left to do is hone the detail



and edge lines. At least, that's the theory. Most of the mistakes you make as a painter happen somewhere in the middle of things.

## 5 Start big, go small

It's an old saying to start with the big shapes and work downward to the small details, but it works. I'm not really sold on the value range I've created at this point, so I import my second thumbnail variant for later experimentation.

## 6 The sign off

We're just about there. I try setting the layer holding Colour Variant 01 to

Soft Light and like the way it livens up the darks. To keep that lower-right-hand head shape from getting completely lost, I copy it from the painting level, set this new layer to Screen, and tweak it until it pops enough. It's a major feature of the piece, despite its size, so it demands I spend some more time shaping it. I experiment with flipping the image but decide I like it best as it is already. The fabric and little head are demanding more polish. Once I have that squared away, I go back into Image Size to convert the image to 300 DPI, and lastly, a sneaky place to tuck my signature.

Stick a fork in her, boys. She's done. ●











## Photoshop & ZBrush

# FREESTYLE CHARACTER DESIGN

Using virtual tools to conceive, traditional medium to refine, then digital media to fully realise, **Neville Page** takes you through a rapid process of generating a character for presentation...

### Artist PROFILE

#### Neville Page

COUNTRY: US  
CLIENTS: BMW, Fiat, Mattel, 20th Century Fox, Warner Brothers, Universal Studios



Neville was born in Manchester, and moved to the US in

1970. After graduating from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, in 1990 he set up a design consultancy with friend Scott Roberston. He is currently working as the creature designer for James Cameron's next movie, codenamed Project 880. He's also developing a product line of artists' tools [www.innovationpage.com](http://www.innovationpage.com)

#### DVD Assets

The files you need are on the DVD

FILES: Final Renders.tif

FOLDERS: Full screenshots

SOFTWARE:

Photoshop CS2 (Demo);

download the ZBrush 2

demo from [http://](http://pixologic.com/order/demoselect.html)

[pixologic.com/order/demoselect.html](http://pixologic.com/order/demoselect.html)

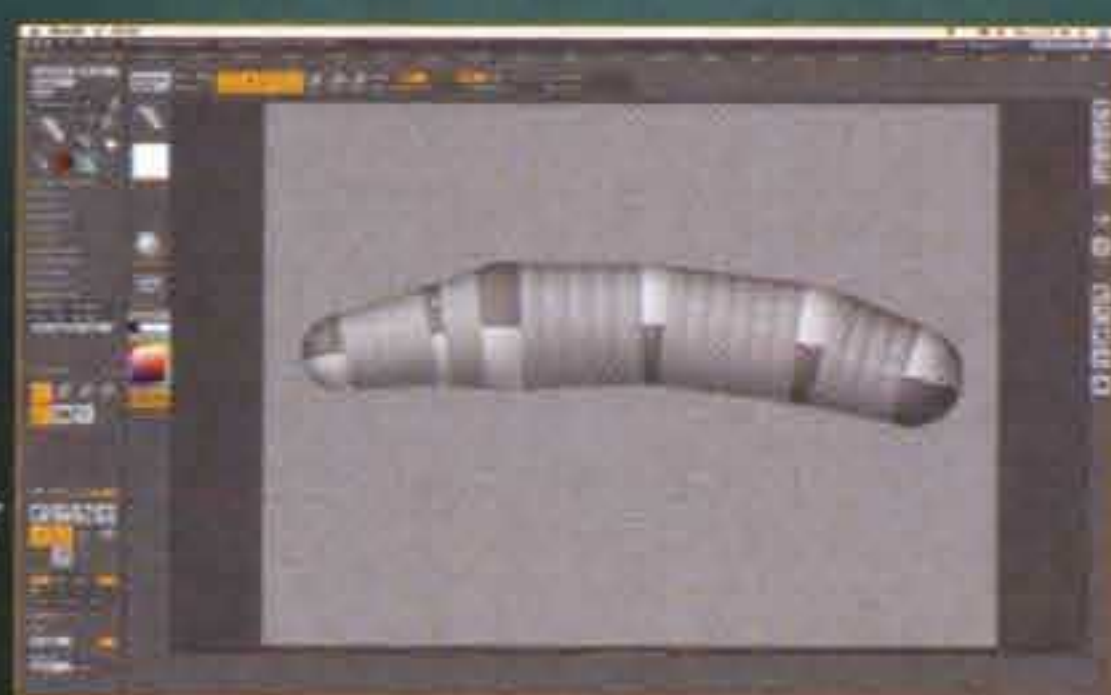
One of the challenges of working in a production scenario is that you often have to come up with not just ideas, but also what appears to be final art, fast. So how do you generate a good concept based on a brief, and what's the fastest way of creating an image based on the concept that looks fairly realistic? This workshop will hopefully give you some answers to these questions, and offer some insight into how I sometimes approach a task.

This is a very specific scenario, where the end result has to feel realistic. A lot of the time I'm just generating quick sketches or even tight pencil drawings to

get the idea across, but it's often the case that the audience (a director, producer, actor) needs to be sold on the idea, and a sketch may be too vague. An image that looks like a scene from a film or game has a better chance of being realised (or chosen) if it's fully understood.

There's a downside to this approach, however, and that is that there's no room for audience interpretation: you, the artist, have to fill in all the blanks. Sometimes a suggestion of an idea is easier to sell because there's room for interpretation, but the danger here is that the viewer may be filling in the blanks differently to how you are, and the end result is a conflict of realisations.

Bearing that in mind, my favourite phrase and philosophy is to 'keep it honest'. By this I mean that if 'it' is a concept, then it needs to be viable. A creature needs to look realistic and plausible in terms of its biology and morphology. If 'it' is a sketch of that concept, the components and anatomy need to work so that the animators can rig it, for example. Additionally, if 'it' is a perspective drawing of your character, it had better be correct in terms of the construction so that what you get in the end (a maquette or digital model) looks like the concept you 'sold' earlier in sketch form. Keeping it honest will spare you a lot of grief at the back end.



## 1 Starting the concept

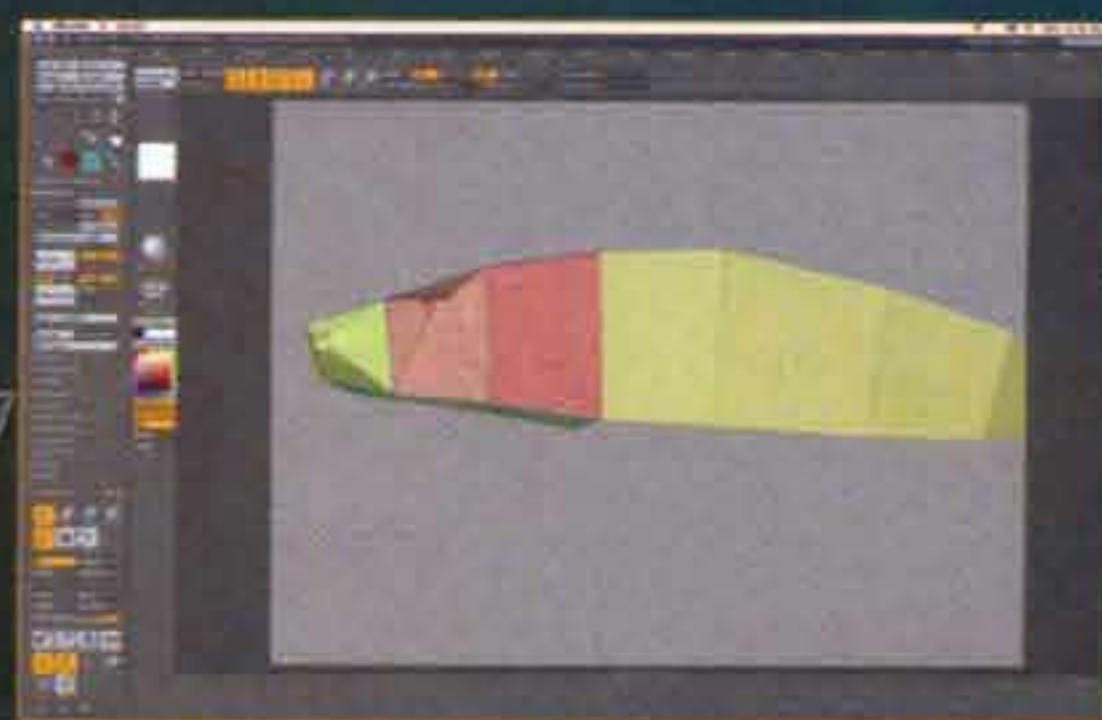
For this exercise we'll assume that the brief is to design a swamp-like creature. It's wide open other than that, and this in itself can be something of a challenge. It may sound liberating to have such freedom, but when you're given parameters there's less room to flounder about; this can help you to come up with a direction faster, and this is key to working efficiently. If the parameters are indistinct, start making up some solid ones for yourself. Even if they're wrong,

I'm a firm believer in the notion that a bad decision is better than no decision. My parameters here are to use eels as an inspiration. They're a desperately upset-looking animal, and I figured that their attitude would be useful in this creature.

Traditionally, I would start with pencil and paper to generate the ideas, but, in light of the fact that this is to be an exercise in efficacy, I will start with clay. The clay of choice today is digital, and specifically ZBrush. Why this over oil-based materials, for example? I don't believe that digital will replace traditional tools entirely, it just lends itself better to the needs of this project. It's like Sculpey vs Chavant (for you sculptors out there): both are fantastic, and both have their place. This is ZBrush's place.

As when using real clay, the approach is to 'find' the design by exploration. I start here by massing-out the form using ZSpheres. This is where you establish all

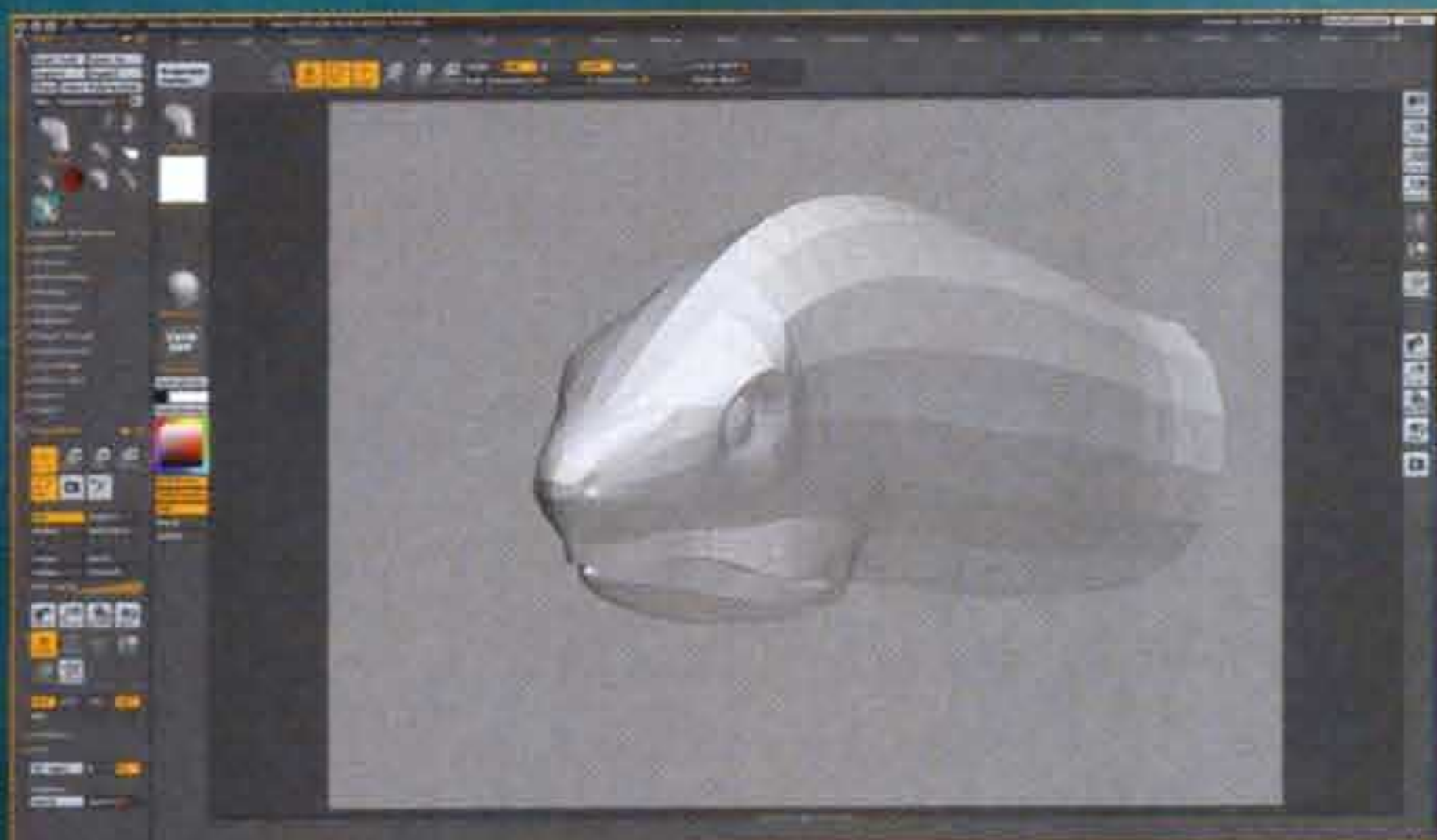
of the components that you'll need later on, such as the eyes and nose.



## 2 Massing out the forms

Although this is digital clay, I still approach it the way I would the real thing. Always work out the big forms first; don't get distracted by details. With real clay I would grab chunks and pile it on; here, I pull on points to mass out large forms. It may not look like much, but I'm starting to get a feel for the proportions, which is THE most important thing in design. ➔



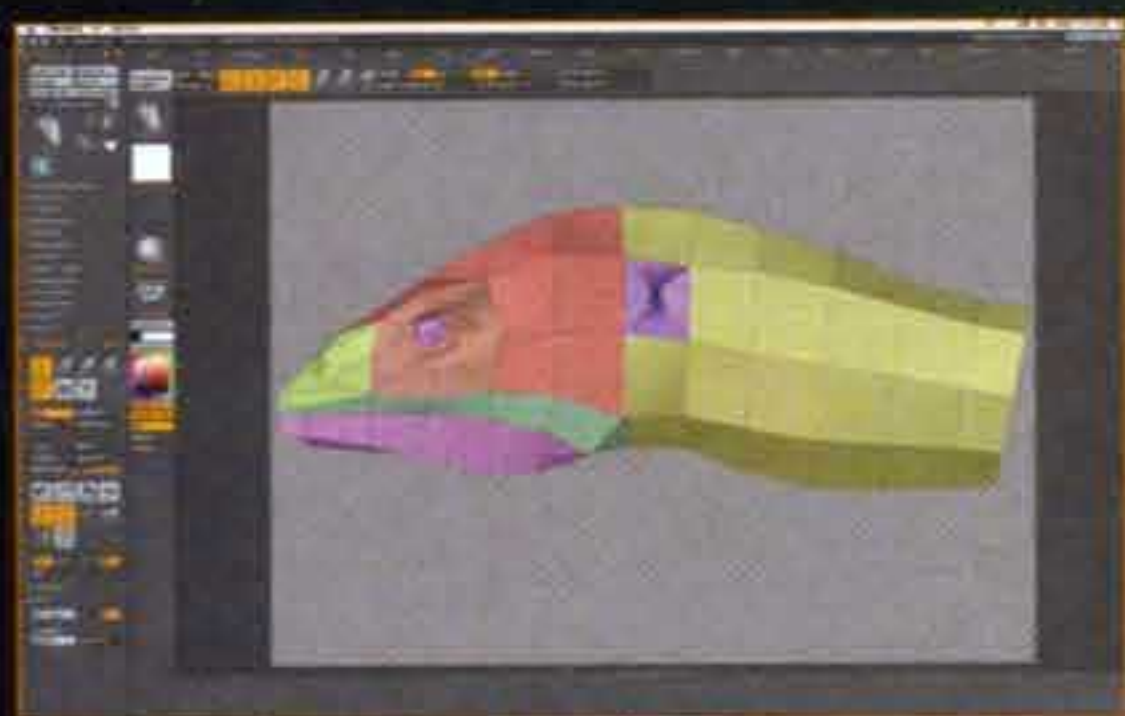


## 3 Stop and review

Although I have a fairly good mental image of what I want from this creature, it's wise to stop and take in what you have at certain points throughout the development process. What I'm looking for here are opportunities that I did not anticipate: a shape may appear, a detail may be suggested – something like that. When I pick up on something I'll decide whether or not to pursue it. Remember, you are the captain of the ship, but if an opportunistic wind blows...

## 4 Refining the form

You may notice in this image that there's a new purple area. The wind did blow, and I saw an opportunity for an ear detail. And, being a digital sculpt, I knew that I had to accommodate the new feature with more polygonal resolution, so I created this using ZBrush's Edge Loop feature. Painless and easy, it enables me to not only add more detail to areas 'on the fly,' but also to have more control over the edge of that detail. For example, you may notice that the eyeball is starting to look sharp at the eyelids. This is because I isolated the eye from everything else and 'creased' the edges; this enables me to add crispness to an edge as I subdivide. Additionally, I worked out separate components, such as the jaw, and edge looped them to give greater resolution down the road. Lastly, I grouped different components as separate polygroups for faster selections.



## PRO SECRETS

### Getting in tune with nature

To create characters that are plausible as living creatures, it's imperative that you dedicate a generous amount of time and energy to anatomy and zoology. You can't be creative without having a good understanding of what nature has already produced. And, quite frankly, Mother Nature has taken all the really good ideas already, making it very difficult for the rest of us to come up with new and innovative ones!



## 5 Sculpting the details

My basic masses are in place now, and I can start to develop more specific forms, and also the 'character'. This creature needs to have that eel look, so the brow is a focus. Once again I'm looking for opportunities (sometimes called happy accidents), and these come from working loose and having many 'stop and review' sessions. When developing any design it's important to have a consistent form language in mind. This methodology comes from my experience as an industrial designer, but it's just as critical in character and creature design. The reason is obvious: we're replicating nature, and nature is very efficient in her designs. For example, a shark has a very consistent form due to its harmony in the viscous environment it lives in. Its morphology facilitates speed and über predation, and there's nothing extra there for the purpose of aesthetics: everything is there for a purpose.

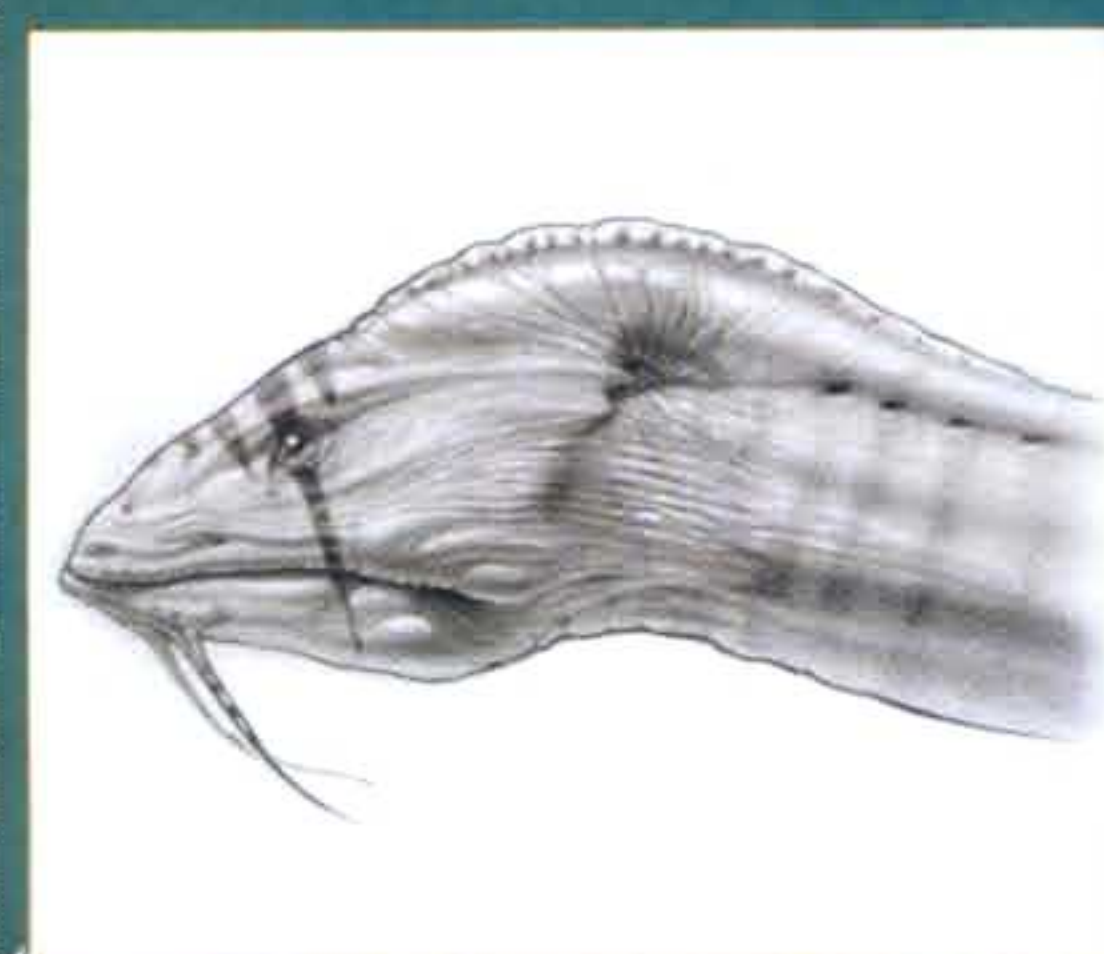


## 6 Step out of the pixels

For me a more efficient way to 'think' is on paper. Oddly, and perhaps this is my own deficiency, I can see things a little better on paper, so I step out of ZBrush for a moment and develop the details and texture concepts on paper. I print out a screen grab of the side view, and do a quick trace. Since I'm content with the overall shape, I stay fairly true to what I've done thus far, but if that wind blows again...

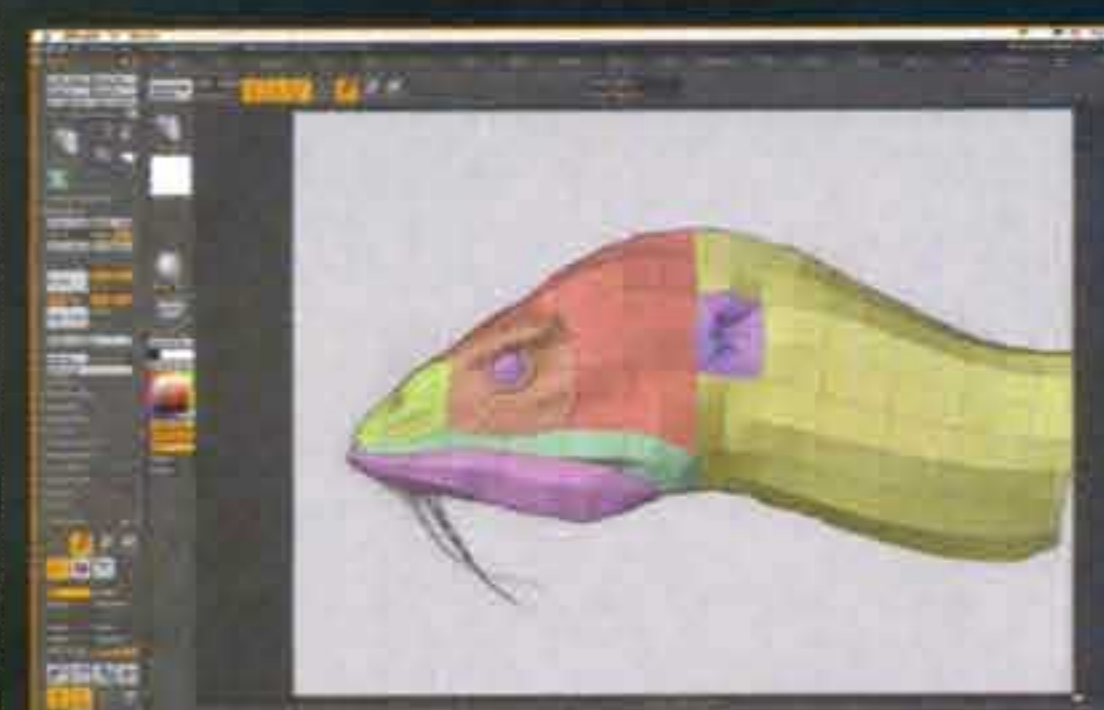
## 7 Refinement of form

What I'm looking for here is to get some 'character' into the creature. Adding details to the eyes helps, and working the subtleties of the mouth adds a little more emotion. If you're curious, I'm working on Design Vellum paper (11x17) with a Faber Castell black wax pencil that's always needle sharp; this gives me better control of subtle, big shading as I hold the pencil approaching horizontal. I will also rub the surface with my finger to spread the value around a bit, and erase highlights. This approach is more about allowing me to see the form through value than about creating art.



## 8 Final details

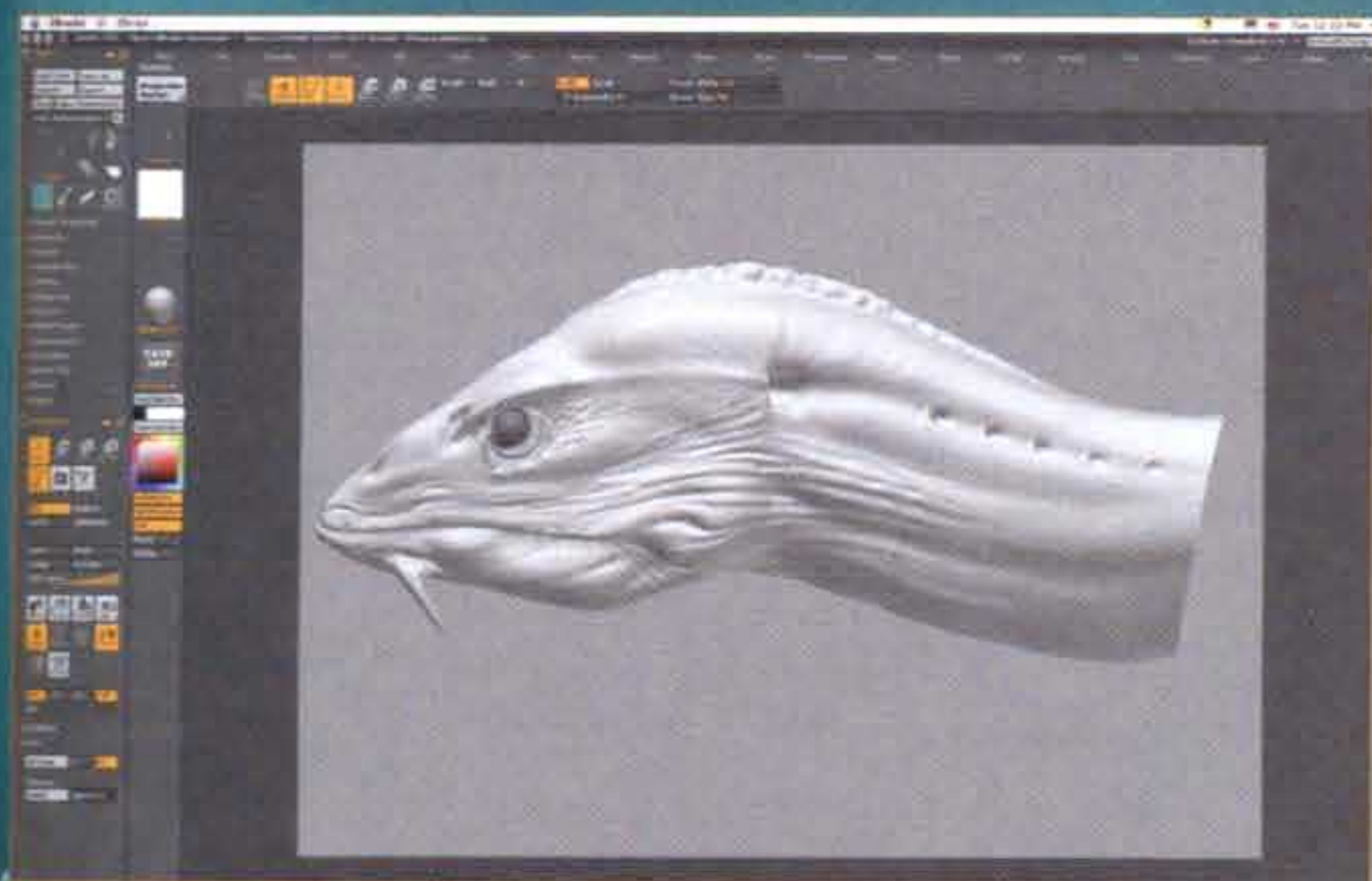
I find that having a plan for my details and textures makes for a quicker sculpting process; erasing pencil is easier than erasing polygons (admittedly, I could always Ctrl+Z). Anyhow, it's important to note that reference is a key part of realism. Don't, at first, try to make stuff up. Study nature, and understand why things look the way they do. This will empower you to create down the road.



## 9 Rework the design

I scan my drawing at this point, and bring it into ZBrush as a template to work over. You can see that I've pulled the proportions to match the drawing. What I'm doing here is getting the sculpt to match the drawing as perfectly as possible. I'm now pretty close to being done with the sculpt, and I'm ready to start adding the textures.



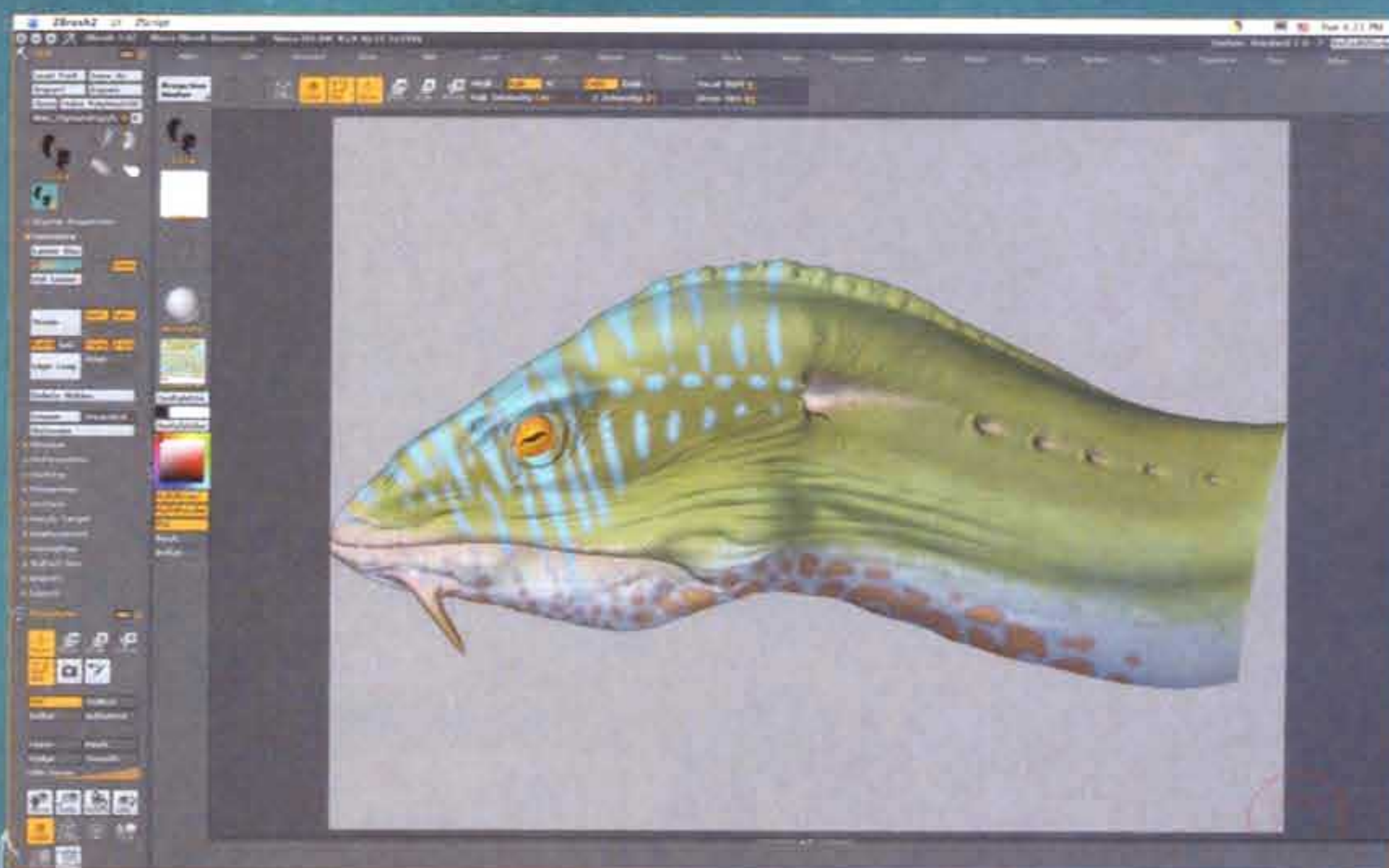


## 10 Texturing

As you probably already know, there are many ways to texture something. Within ZBrush I like to use the Projection Master to get most of the smaller details. I'm not trying to get a perfect model here (remember, the design may not be approved, so this is to be a fast, suggestive piece).

## 11 Colour and graphics

Part of the allure of sea life is the amazing colours and graphics. I didn't want to have a typical monochrome green beast, so to infuse a dash of creativity I thought it might be interesting to use a tropical fish as an inspiration, and play the effect down later. The fastest way for me to do this was to paint the patterns in Photoshop over an exported document. Make sure the pattern is the exact same proportion (it does not have to be the exact same pixel size, just proportion). I used references that felt right, and quickly roughed-in some colours and patterns – nothing too tight, as I had a sense of how moody the piece was to be. Think Hollywood. Facades only. If you don't see it, don't address it.



## 12 Apply the map

I snapped the model to dead side view (no perspective), switched to Projection Master, and then imported the pattern document. Since it was created in the exact proportions, it lays over exactly the way I rendered it. I made sure that it was double-sided, without fade, and then applied the map. Fortunately, the graphics laid out acceptably for the view I was looking for. No clean-up needed at all – how often does that happen?

## 13 Setting up the illustration

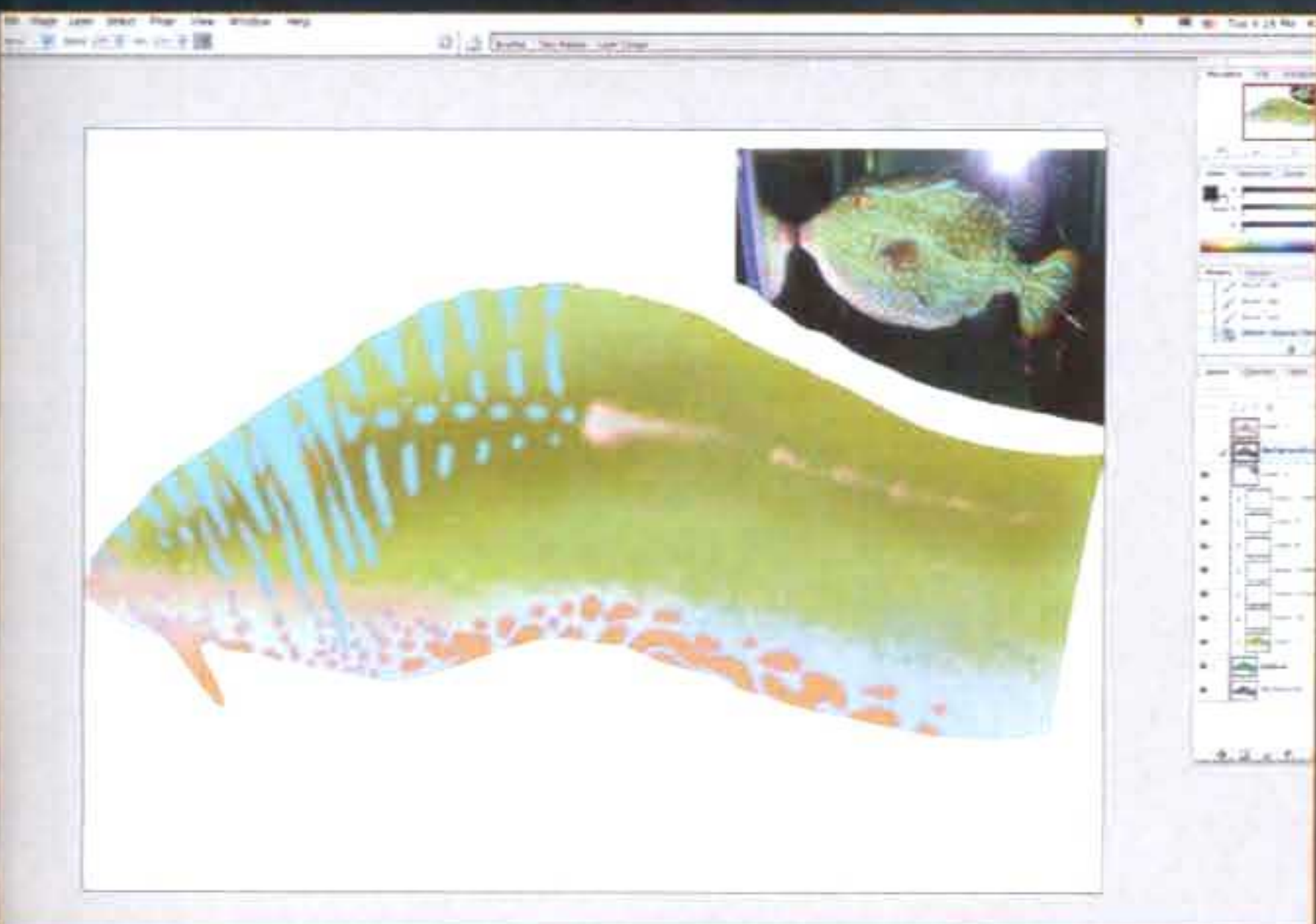
I spent a little bit of time working on the lighting, to try and get it to feel integrated into a swamp scenario. Possibly not enough time was spent, but I tend to play around a bit too much here, and as I've said, this is supposed to be a relatively quick, yet tight, concept. Once the render was completed I imported it into Photoshop. I immediately put a field of

colour around the creature to help me see it better in terms of colour and value. I added the gradation knowing that there would be a sense of drop-off in depth, and that this would affect certain colour and value choices too.

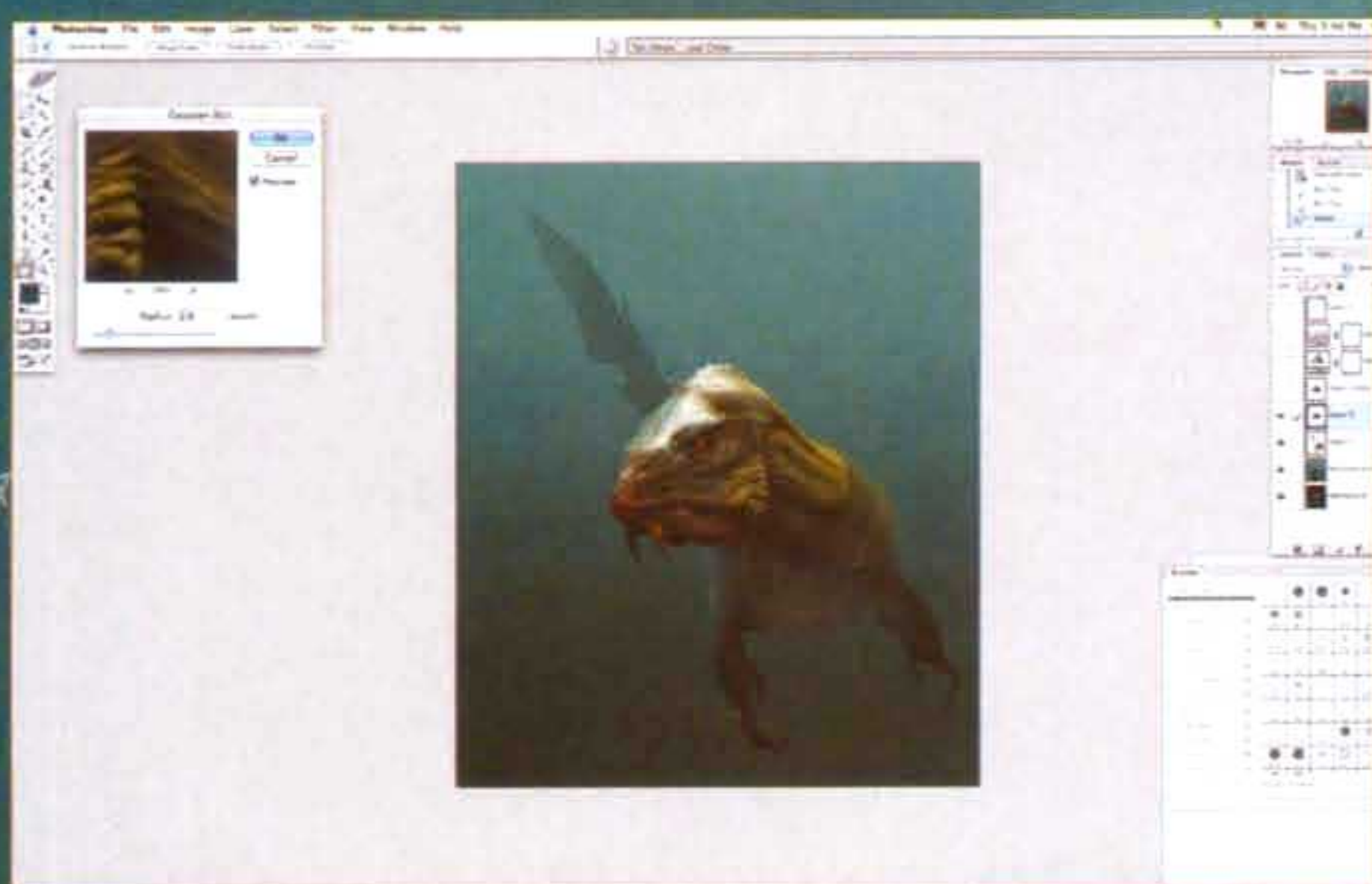


## 14 Complete the design

I did envision only doing a head study, but it ended up feeling too much like an eel, and not enough creature, so I quickly roughed-out a body design. The colour was chosen simply so that I could see the drawing, and the design is







loose because I know that it only needs to be an indication, as the head will still be the focal point, and the body will fade off into the murky water.

## 15 Integrate the body

I locked the body layer so that I could paint over it quickly to integrate it into the image. The head needed to seamlessly transition into the body, and then the body needed to fit into the palette of the water. I faded (Gaussian blurred) the neck into the painted body, and then added massive amounts of 'atmospheric perspective' to the body and tail. Lastly, I progressively blurred the body as it faded into the distance.

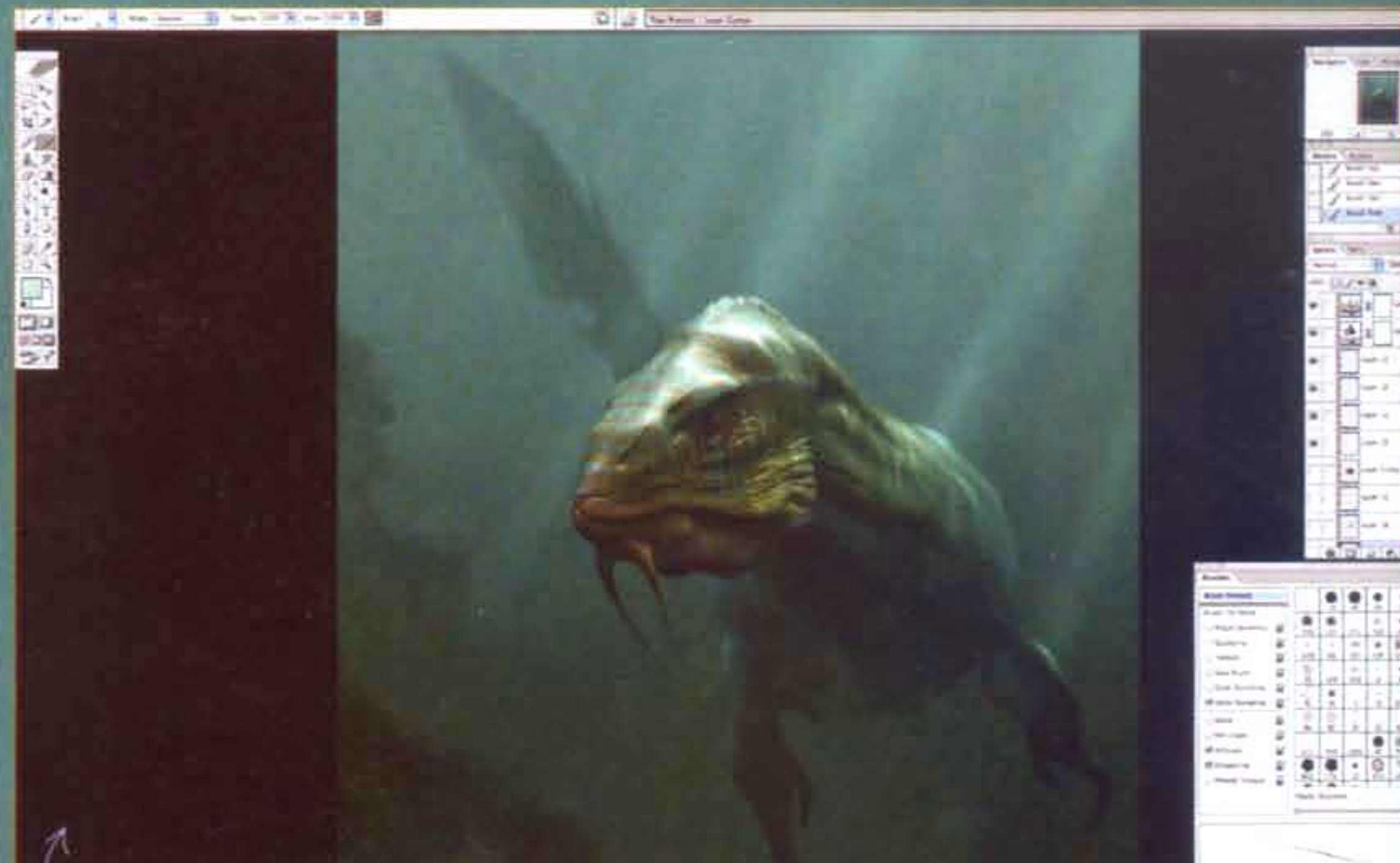
## 16 Environment

To get a sense of the cinematic moment, I added some environmental features. I roughed out some rock structures and blurred them, then added some rays of light and the resulting caustics on his back on a new layer set to Colour Dodge mode – just enough to tie him into the water.

## PRO SECRETS

### The laws of physics

I mentioned before that proportion is important. Nature, once more, having worked at it for a few million years, has refined her vocabulary. But she was confined to the same parameters that you and I are, and that is universal physics. This is the stuff that controls the outcome of all things, and their resulting proportions. It is the Golden Mean, the Golden Rectangle, 1.61, the Fibonacci Sequence; some would even say it is God. Take some time to research this side of nature and physics, and you'll use the parameters that Mother Nature works with to create such compelling results.



## 17 Final details

The image looked a little too clean at this point, so I added some particulates to the water. This is a typical underwater photography phenomenon – a by-product of strobe called backscatter. It's a bad thing, but it helps to make the image feel more realistic (I hope). The next thing to do is colour balancing and Levels

adjustment. I often create two adjustment layers for this, and 'slider' around until it feels right. The last thing I'll do is add film grain, for two reasons: one is to make the image feel more 'filmic', and the second is to take out the crispness of the lack of detail. This, one last time, was intended to be a fast and realistic illustration of a creature concept. Nothing laboured.











## Henning Ludvigsen's SPOTLIGHT

Our resident fantasy artist takes a look at his favourite paintings of the moment, offering a critique and some valuable insight into a recent piece of digital artwork

Featured artwork **LUCREZIA NAVARRE** Client **FANTASY AUTHOR JOE MANDER** Artist **BENITA WINCKLER**

**P**ersonally I'm very fond of symmetry and simple composition, just like Lucrezia Navarre by German digital artist Benita Winckler. It usually takes a lot for me to not love sword wielding fantasy characters, but there are things about this painting that I believe any art appreciator will be fascinated by. The vague sci-fi elements hinted by parts of the character's outfit, and the hanging

cables on each side which works a dual purpose of framing and giving the piece a slight distance from pure fantasy.

Benita explains: "Since this was a commissioned piece, there were some extra-steps involved in the working process. The initial sketches were made with great attention to detail, so that the client could choose from different versions of clothes, etc." It's quite obvious that all the effort made early on in the

process has paid off, as the design and cut of the character's outfit, choice of colours proves that not much was left to chance.

Benita has done a fine job figuring out what areas to give attention. The hair itself is quite rough, smooth and with no single strains of hair showing. Right next to it you have highly detailed, beautiful eyes, and embossed decoration on the uniform. Benita has been bold with technique and it works to great effect. ●

### Artist PROFILE

**Benita Winckler**



**AGE:** 29  
**JOB:** Student and freelance illustrator  
**FAVOURITE:**

**ARTISTS:** Wendi Pini, Brian Froud, Dead Can Dance

**TOOLS:** Photoshop and Painter

**WEB:**  
[www.dunkelgold.de](http://www.dunkelgold.de)

**EMAIL:**  
[benita@dunkelgold.de](mailto:benita@dunkelgold.de)

### Artist insight: Benita explains how she created Lucrezia Navarre



- 1** First I did several sketches of her character in different poses and with different types of clothes. Some of the guidelines were as follows: priest like clothes in dark red, golden and black; a bit of a military style; long blond hair; blue eyes and an overall look of importance.
- 2** I blocked in the colours and decided that my primary light source would be somewhere at the ceiling, high above her head. To show her importance, I thought it would be good to add a little stage to raise her up and I also placed her right in the centre of the image.
- 3** Another guideline was to give the image a slightly futuristic feel. I suggested some cables and clouds of steam in the background. Then I put more work into the figure. I refined the folds of the fabric around her sword, added some textures and small details to her clothes.

Have you seen an outstanding piece of art you want to see featured in Spotlight? Email [henning@imaginefx.com](mailto:henning@imaginefx.com) with the subject Spotlight.



*Artist insight*

# GETTING COMPOSITION RIGHT

Composition is key to illustrations.  
**Gary Tonge** shares essential advice

## Artist PROFILE

**Gary Tonge**

COUNTRY: UK

CLIENTS: Capcom, SCI/  
Eidos, National  
Geographic, BBC



Gary is an  
art director  
in the games  
industry and  
also takes on

freelance commissions  
as a concept artist,  
illustrator and matte  
painter. He prefers to  
express enormous vistas  
and grand scenes with  
his personal work.  
[www.visionafar.com](http://www.visionafar.com)

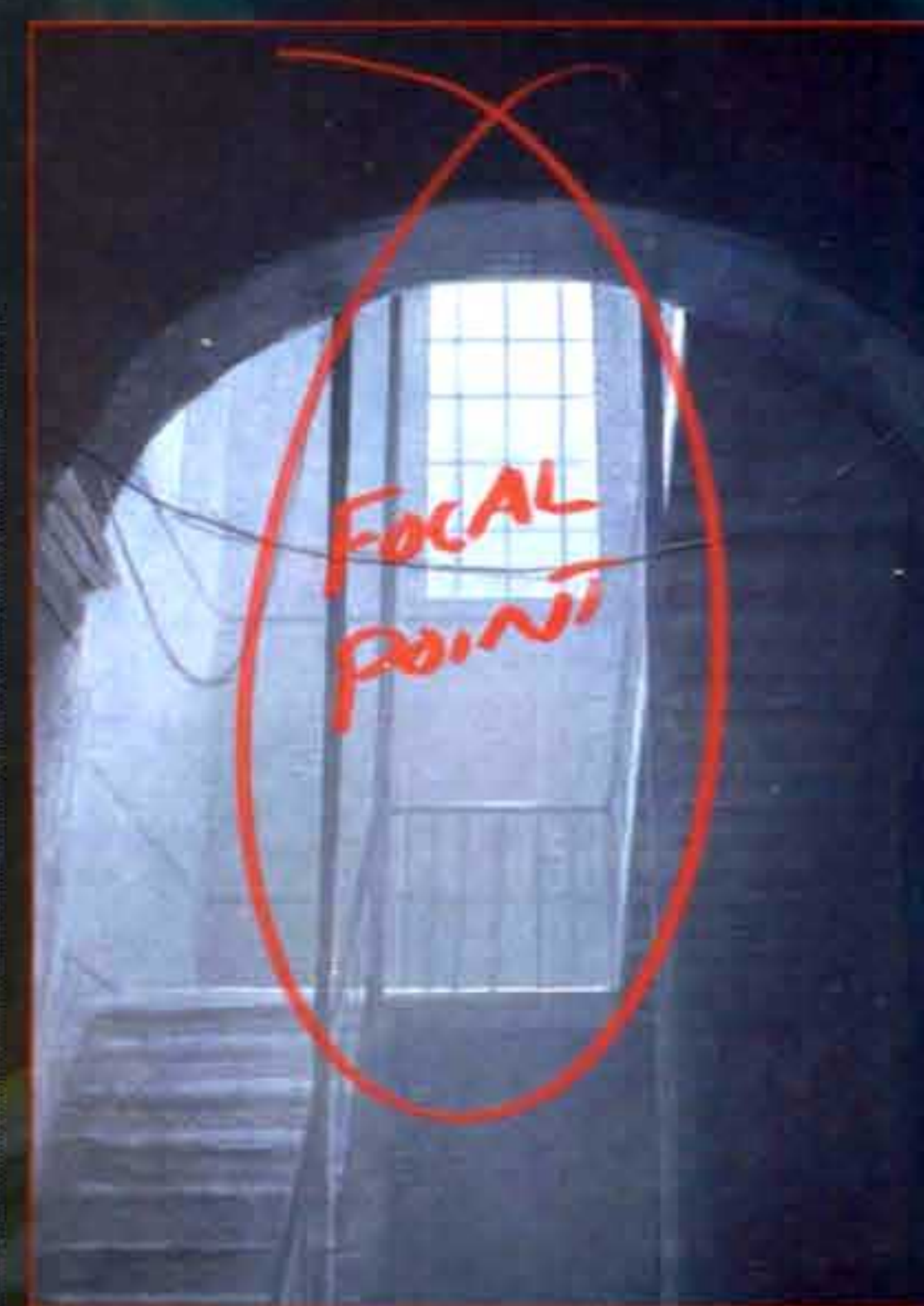
**C**reating an interesting and inviting composition is the key to pleasing illustrations; images that are strongly composed with well-solved elements will draw a viewer into them and hold the eye while the details you have spent so much time slaving over are taken in.

Conversely, a badly composed image can undermine even the finest painted subjects, generating a subjective feeling that something is wrong. Many may not be able to put their finger on why, but the image will be less pleasing and read poorly, which,

ultimately, will not hold up to scrutiny. The next few pages contain 20 points that I consider to be some of the most important parts to composition, the rules I lean on subconsciously every time I pick up my brush. Want to know more? Read on...

### 1 FOCAL POINT

Every strong composition has a dominant object, or focal point (FP), that provides the fulcrum to the rest of the image. Everything else in the image should try to complement or frame this element. A focal point could be anything from a skyscraper







Carefully placing elements will pay enormous dividends, adding depth, balance and believability to the final image. Some good examples of this are the swooping landscape off into the distance in *Nimbus*, which helps underpin the arched structure, or the smaller vehicles tending to the docked craft in *Prometheus*.

### 3 SCENE TO SUBJECT UNITY

It is of vital importance that all elements within a scene look like they belong there, ensuring that shapes and structures in the distance, for instance, are sympathetically influenced by any atmospheric conditions between them and the viewer; or that structures and objects receive light correctly and cast appropriate shadows. If you get this right it adds greatly to the composition. Get it wrong, and it can unravel the entire scene. A good example is the craft on *Prometheus*, which casts shadows onto the dock and surrounding buildings, greatly increasing the believability of its position in the scene.

### 4 FRAMING

In a complex composition it can be useful to add cohesion to the



perimeter of a piece by framing; which can help contour the viewer's eye into the picture and hold it there. This can be achieved by gently bringing shapes into the scene, or the use of strong silhouettes to help guide the eye toward any areas of interest, most commonly the focal point. *Prometheus* demonstrates this well: I have framed the top of the image with a large docking bay.

in the distance to a small paper cup sitting on the window ledge of a skyscraper overlooking a city. It's imperative that the focal point be well solved into the image. There are a couple of straightforward ways to place your focal point - 'The Rule of Thirds' and 'The Golden Section' - but I will not go into details here about these because I try to push beyond these rules, attempting diverse layouts while still maintaining a pleasing composition.

### 2 POSITIONING OF OTHER OBJECTS

Other elements within the composition should harmonise with the focal point and therefore strengthen the overall composition.





“When deciding what colours are going to be dominant in a piece, it’s important to remember that generally the image will be either cool or warm in feeling”

## 5 AVOIDING TANGENTS

These can be quite destructive to the way an image is read and should be avoided. Tangents are lines from separate elements, which follow on from each other, causing reading problems between the intersecting shapes. A good example would be overhead power lines intersecting directly onto a corner of a building. Shifting the power lines up or down so they meet the building away from the corner will mend the problem and make reading that part of the composition substantially easier and more pleasing.

## 6 TEMPERATURE

When deciding what colours are going to be dominant in a piece, it’s important to remember that generally the image will either be cool or warm in feeling, it cannot be both at once (unless it’s a panning matte, but that is essentially two or more images). There is no problem in having both types of colour in a piece, but one must dominate, even if only a little, such as in the internal Dungeon rope bridge image.



## 7 DYNAMIC VALUES

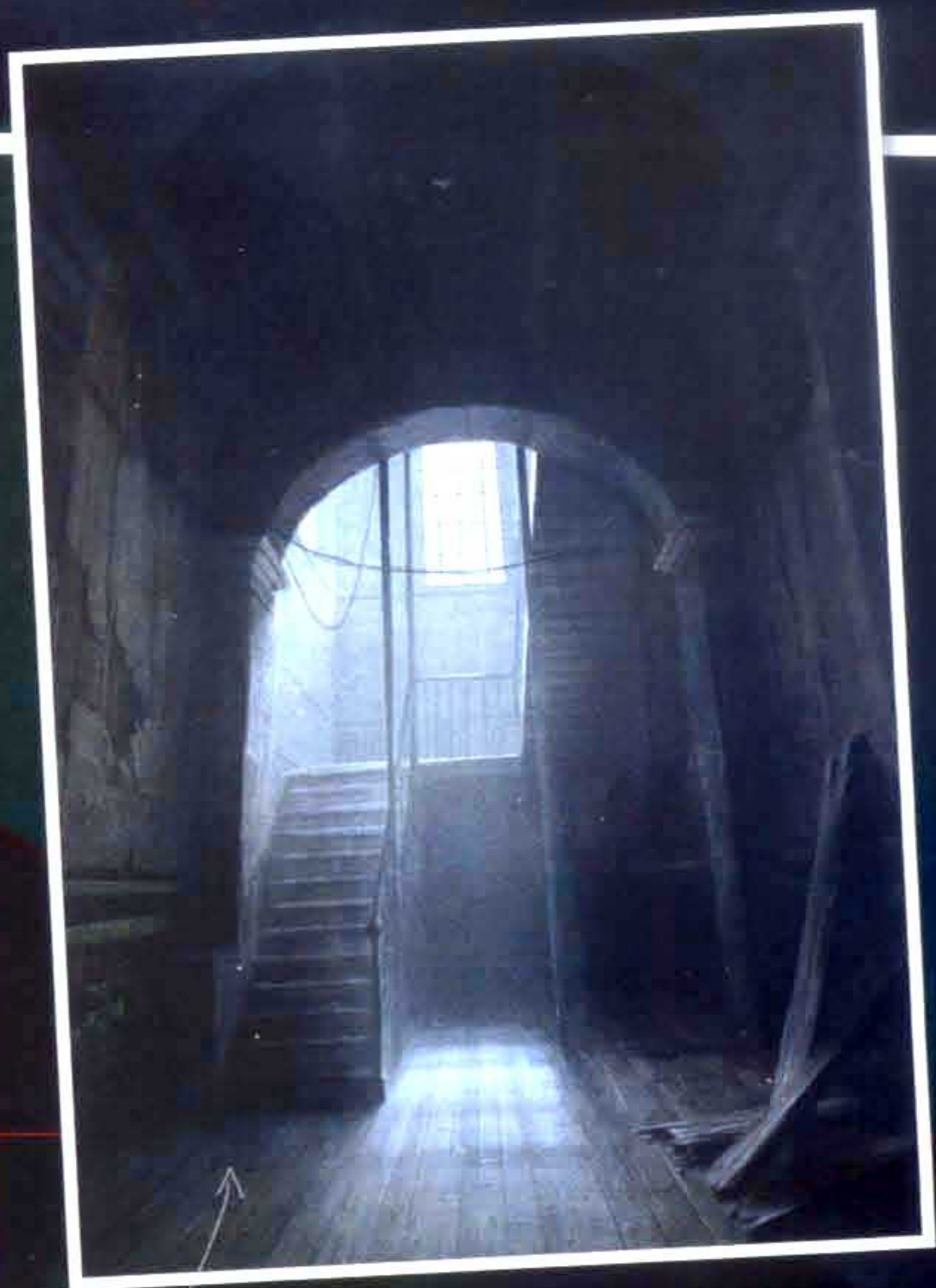
Tonal values are an important attribute in generating **interesting compositions**. Ideally you want to aim for a nice balance between light, mid-tone and dark, using at least some of each. Look to produce a **nice balance** with a large amount of one value, a medium amount of another value and a small amount of the final one, such as, 60% dark, 25% mid-tone and 15% light for an image such as The Room.

## 8 DEPTH

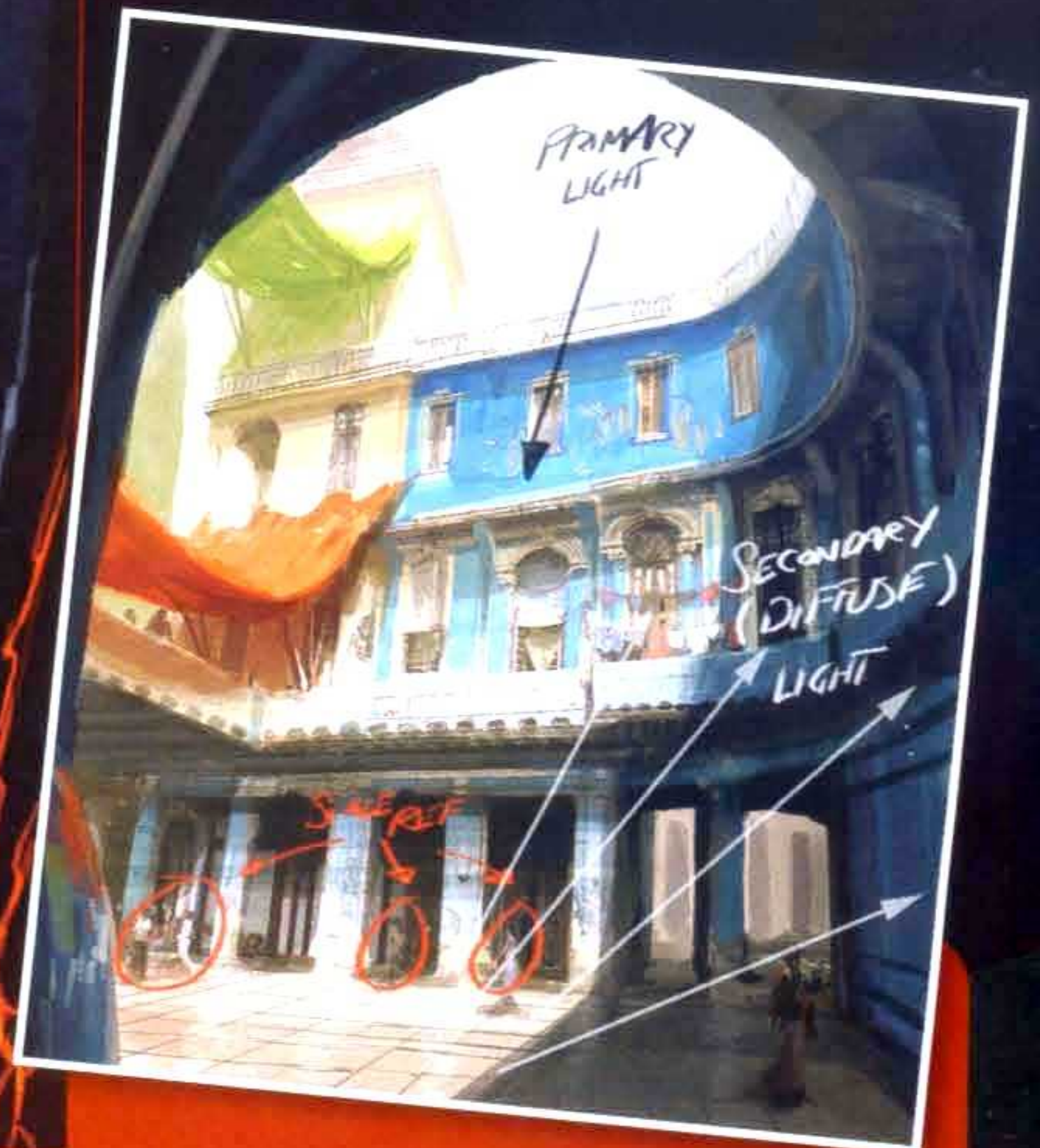
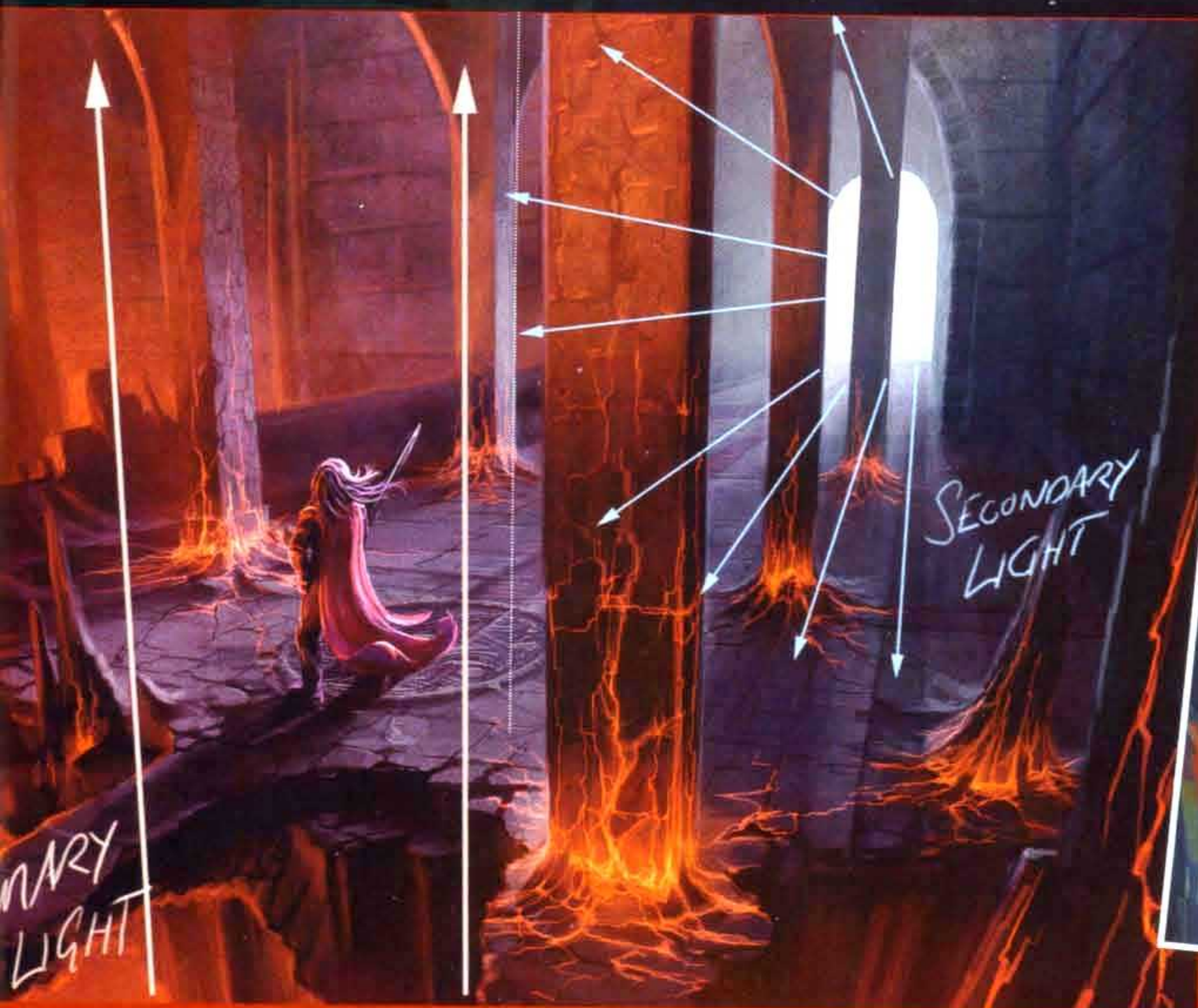
Depth and perspective are incredibly important. Vista images require an organised and believable depth using certain perspective cues to draw the eye deeper into the image. These elements could be a fence, railway track, cityscape, or even something as subtle as a line of similar coloured flowers in a field. Even within smaller scale still-life images it is greatly beneficial to create depth to hold the image together and draw the eye towards the focal point. All the best composed images look like you are viewing them from within.

## 9 KISSING

Related to tangents, kissing refers to **shapes just touching**. Elements within a scene should either be definitely apart from each other or definitely overlapped. Kissing elements create a weak, connected shape, which distracts the viewer’s eye, causing a pause in reading the piece. Either ensure your shapes **positively overlap** or keep them apart: no kissing please!







## 10 LIGHT

Once the basic shapes are in place this is the **most important element** for me in an image. Getting the lighting right in a composition is what I focus on once I start painting up a drawing. I have broken this into a few sections to help explain the different elements involved in creating **cohesive lighting** and therefore, believable compositional balance.

## 11 LET THERE BE LIGHT

Choose a position for the primary (strongest) light source, the sun, a window or streetlamp for instance, that will produce the greatest opportunity for convincing shape description of subjects and interesting shadow work. The primary light source can be the fundamental part of a composition and even its focal point; it dictates how everything within its influence will be painted. Without light, we see nothing; that's how important it is, so be sure you get it right.

## 12 SHADOWS

Shadow work can be used to great effect to reinforce subject shapes, solidify objects into the scene and add additional framing to the composition if used cleverly (for example the shadows cast down from the upper dock structure onto the lower promenade in Prometheus). Importantly, shadows' effectiveness relies greatly on the initial light source positioning.



## 13 ADDITIONAL LIGHT SOURCES

Secondary and tertiary light sources are significant factors in balancing the final composition. Secondary sources could simply be the **diffuse or sharp light** reflected back from surfaces lit by the primary light source, or attenuated lights such as street lamps and car headlights, even a light source that is nearly as strong as the primary. Using secondary light sources adds an opportunity to **increase detail**, solidity and to reinforce the position of elements in a scene.

## 14 ATMOSPHERE

Atmospheric depth and occlusion are very important ingredients in solidifying the composition of a piece, be it a large vista where the sheer amount of air between the viewer and horizon transform colouring and tonal contrast in the distance, or a smaller area, where light passes through fine particles in the air to create soft diffusion and subtle changes in colouring (you can see this in The Room). Photonic bounce also adds to the relative atmosphere generating diffuse light, which shoots out from lit subjects, bathing the surroundings with soft reflected light.





## 15 MATERIALS

Well thought-out and solved materials within a scene are important to maintaining compositional balance. It's crucial to recognise how using highly reflective or shiny surfaces may draw the viewer's eye towards that area of the image. In *Prometheus* I have used a number of reflective surfaces, utilising their high impact properties to hold the eye in the image and not just become drawn toward the craft, while also paying close attention to not allowing them to overrun the focal point, rather to reinforce it. Alternatively, the clever use of dull and dirty textures can help create completely different feeling settings, in *The Room* for example.



## 16 LEADING THE EYE

Using elements to draw the eye into and around an image is significant in a pleasing final illustration. You can lead the eye into the piece in many ways, such as the old favourites, a fence or road moving into the distance or in the case of *Nimbus* a ruddy great structure piercing the

sky that moves from the top left into the centre. The end result is that the viewer will follow the arch until the end and by then they are in the heart of the piece.

## 17 KEEPING THE EYE WITHIN THE PICTURE

Once the viewer's eye is within the piece it's important to hold their attention. Going back to the old fence moving from left to right into the distance, you would need something at the right of the piece, such as a group of trees or maybe a farmhouse for example, to steer the eye gently back into the composition. Again, on *Nimbus*, you can see the eyeline that followed the arch is held in the piece by the city, the landscape to the left and the close up building to the right.

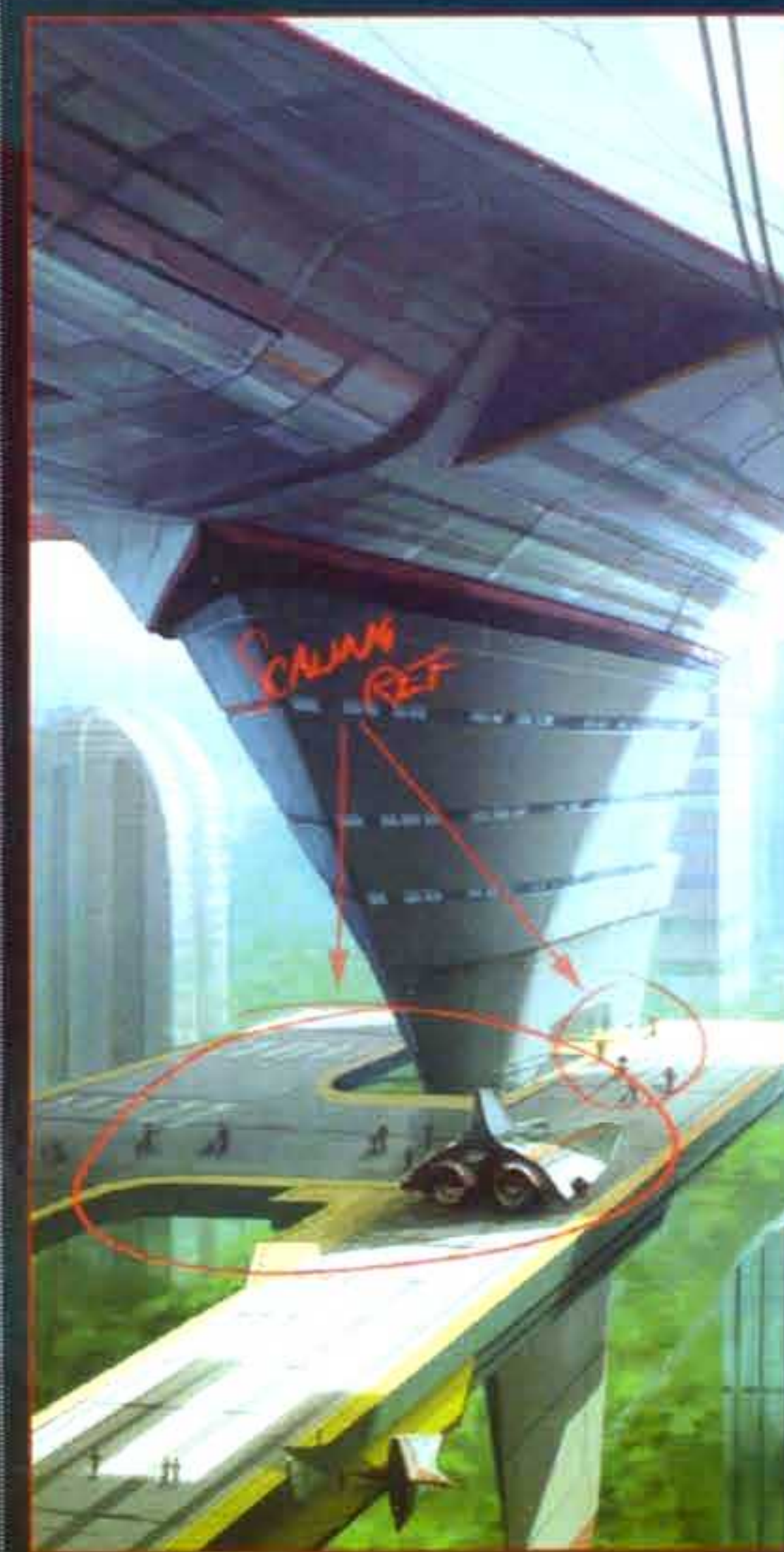
## 18 DRAMA

Large vistas and epic images are normally either dramatic or very tranquil. Creating a dramatic feel to an image couples a number of basic compositional rules to underline the depth, scale, **speed or stillness** of the projected subject. In *Nimbus* the large arched structure comes from over the viewer's head, skims the clouds and falls off into the distance to show just how big it is compared to the **relatively small** conventional skyscrapers near its grounding point.

## 19 BALANCE

Balance within a composition can take some practice, particularly if your focal point is a spectacular or dynamic shape that controls much of the image space. Referring back to *Nimbus*, again, I have balanced the piece by using numerous smaller buildings, the falling away landscape to the left and also the addition of

the clouds, which importantly soften the shape as it approaches the top of the frame. These elements together enable the outrageous focal point to sit in harmony with the rest of the scene.



## 20 SCALING RELATIVITY

Complex images that show highly differential shapes and sizes require some real life reference to enable the viewer to understand the actual scale of the subjects in a piece. In *Prometheus* I used a number of people, some close and some far to show the incredible scale of the craft and its dock. You can get away with crazy scaling as long as there is continuity across the scene. The same principles are there for smaller subjects - a set of pencils or a telephone on top of a desk - so that the viewer can understand the size of the table. ●



## Part 3

### Artist PROFILE

**Jonny Duddle**

**COUNTRY:** UK

**CLIENTS:** Codemasters, Sony, Universal, Warner Brothers, Buena Vista, and Crave



Jonny somehow ended up in the games industry

where he has worked primarily as a concept artist for seven years.

[www.duddlebug.com](http://www.duddlebug.com)

### DVD Assets

The files you need are on the DVD

**FILES:** ChimpskiAlone\_01-04.tif, ChimpskiAlone\_Final.tif

**FOLDERS:**

Full screenshots

**SOFTWARE:**

Painter IX (Demo), Photoshop CS2 (Demo)

# MIXED MEDIA & EXPERIMENTS

Combine the strengths of Painter and Photoshop to develop a multi-package workflow, by **Jonny Duddle**

**T**his is the third and final workshop in my Chimpski series. ImagineFX challenged me to learn Corel Painter IX and I can never resist a challenge! Two months ago, my goal was to get my head around Painter and assess its potential as part of my workflow. The previous two workshops have been produced almost exclusively in Painter IX, but in this one I'm going to explore using Painter IX.5 and Photoshop together.

In the previous workshops, there have been occasions where I've struggled in Painter to do something that would be

quick and easy for me to do in Photoshop. I stubbornly stuck with Painter until I resolved the problem or found an alternative. It helped me familiarise myself with the package, and particularly its online help. It also seemed appropriate to the challenge that I didn't sneak back to my old friend Photoshop at every hurdle. But as a freelance illustrator, an hour or two spent searching through online help is an hour or two working further into the small hours. And, more importantly, there are things that Photoshop just does better. Photoshop is a world leading

photo-editing package that boasts a multitude of tools for colour adjustments and compositional tweaking and, at this point, I'd rather do this kind of fiddling in Photoshop. Photoshop also has great brushes and I don't see an end to my Photoshop painting. But Painter has a wealth of beautiful brushes that do a good job of impersonating real media and I think I can successfully incorporate Painter IX into my workflow.

In the previous instalment, Chimpski arrived on the moon. This month, Chimpski recovers from his bad landing and writes a postcard home.





## 1 Real pencils and real paper!

One of my goals for this workshop was to mix media. So a real pencil drawing seemed a good place to start. I produce a lot of sketches directly in Photoshop, but I made good use of another train journey to London and sketched Chimpiski writing a postcard to Chimpiski Junior. For concept work my favourite pencils are blue Col-Erase pencils on a smooth paper, preferably sharpened with a knife. Unfortunately, my knife looks a little threatening on the train so it stays at home while I get annoyed by a blunt pencil sharpener.



**Shortcuts**  
**Screen Mode Toggle**  
Ctrl+M (PC)  
Apple+M (Mac)  
This toggles the screen between a floating window and a full screen.

## PRO SECRETS

### Keep organised

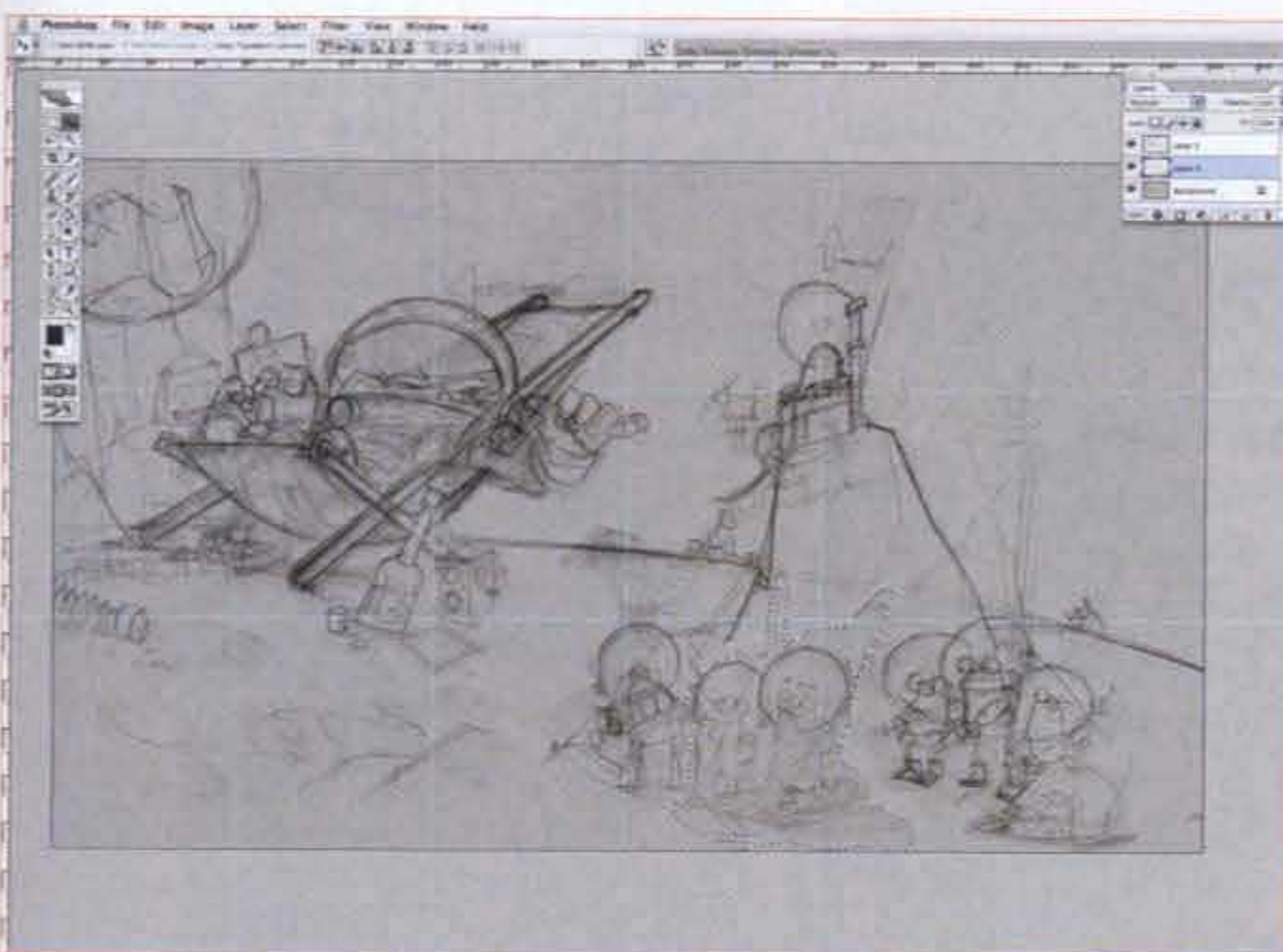
An organised folder structure and logical file names can save time and avoid confusion. This is especially true when switching between packages and saving different versions of an image. You can spend an age looking through folders if you use filenames like MyPic\_Final.psd, that end up being superseded by titles such as MyPic\_FinalFinalFinal.psd. I use consecutive file names with logical titles, and save incremental versions regularly.

## 2 Scanning

I like the space on an A3 sheet of paper, but my scanner is only A4. So I need to make two scans. To ensure that they line up correctly I position the A3 sheet carefully into the corner of the scanner's plastic frame and make sure there's space around the scanner so the sheet isn't being skewed by a mug or keyboard. In Photoshop, I scan each half of the drawing and then drag the two scans on to a new image. Once I'm completely happy with the alignment I flatten the image, desaturate and adjust the levels. The sketch won't survive into my final painting so I'm not worried about aesthetics as much as the strength of the line as a useful template. I double-click on the background to turn it into a layer, turn the blend mode to Multiply and create a new grey background as a base to my painting.

## 3 Compositional tweaks

I assess the drawing and decide it needs some compositional tweaking. I set up some guides to divide my painting



into thirds, horizontally and vertically, to find some good focal points. I use the magnetic lasso to select Chimpiski and his deckchair and move them over to the left a little. I also make some scale adjustments and move the camera upwards to form a nice triangle between Chimpiski, the camera and the Moon Folk. I spend a little time considering the position of the Earth, which I originally wanted behind Chimpiski as a backdrop to his photograph. But it seems to work much better in the composition when it's positioned prominently in the top right.

## 4 Over to Painter

Once I'm happy with the drawing, I switch to Painter. I need to block in the base colours for the image so try out a few brushes. A few weeks earlier I'd read Jason Chan's workshop in ImagineFX 04 and he mentioned blocking in colour with the Coarse Mop Brush so I try it out and find it's perfect. At this stage I'm working on the background behind the line art, and trying to get a feel for the colour and lighting of the illustration. I regularly hide the line art to look at what's happening with the brush marks.



## 5 Deleting the line art

With the base colours in place, I switch back to Photoshop to delete the line art. I could use an eraser in Painter,

but I decide Photoshop will give me more control. When deleting major elements of an illustration I use a layer mask for flexibility. I create a layer mask by clicking on the grey rectangle with a white circle at the base of the layers palette, and begin painting out the line art. I keep some parts of the sketch to help me later, especially in detailed areas where I think I'll need more guidance while painting. I merge the line art layer with the background when I'm done.

## 6 Collage

I've mentioned 'mixed media' already and I decide to throw in a bit of a collage. I take a few snippets of ground from some NASA moon photos and collage them around the surface of the moon in the picture. I set the blend mode on the collage layers to Overlay so that the painting beneath will show through the texture. I want to experiment a bit with this illustration and I like the idea of incorporating photographic textures into painted illustrations. I'm not convinced it'll work out, but that's half the fun.



## 7 And back to Painter...

Back in Painter, I paint in the blackness of space and define the forms poking above the horizon, such as the flag, the moon buggy, the rocky outcrop and Chimpiski himself. I pick a very deep blue and paint in with the Wet Gouache Round brush to get a nice flat finish. I also start building up detail on Chimpiski himself, concentrating on the effects of light on his spacesuit with some bright rim lighting on his outreached hand.







## 8 The deckchair

The deckchair has been bugging me. I'm not looking for perfect perspective and I've opted for the enjoyable process of 'wonkification' on most of the props, but the deckchair doesn't sit quite right on the surface. I raise the far front edge and suddenly it looks right. When sketching I envisaged a very soviet red deckchair emblazoned with a hammer and sickle, but realise it would all be a bit too much and would distract the viewer from Chimpki. I try out a striped alternative, but opt for a very utilitarian buff colour.

## 9 Working on Chimpki

I paint in Chimpki's face. He's actually quite small in relation to the canvas, so much of his features are suggested rather than painted. I'm

### Shortcuts

#### Rotate canvas

**E** This shortcut allows you to rotate your canvas purely for comfort. Hold down shift to restrict the rotations to 90 degrees.

### PRO SECRETS

#### More on colour

I had a few problems with colours when switching between Photoshop and Painter in CMYK. In Photoshop, don't just use Image>Mode>CMYK Colour. To get decent results, use Edit>Convert to Profile to change from RGB to CMYK. With this method the colour numbers are shifted to preserve the original colour appearance.



looking for a painted look – it'd be easy to zoom in and shrink my brush down to get right into his facial details, but I don't think that would sit well in the illustration. So I keep it bold.



## 10 Other details

I don't want to get too bogged down detailing the other elements of the picture and want to keep them loose and stylised. I try to make simple marks and shapes to suggest much of the form and detail in these elements. This will hopefully give a coherent stylised look across the picture.



## 11 The Moon Folk

The little alien creatures are skulking behind a rock and hatching a plan to capture a soviet chimp. There are a lot of them and I don't want them to be the first thing the viewer sees, so I need to keep them hidden in the shadows. With this in mind, I paint in very simple glass helmets with strong reflections and stick to a very limited palette.



## 12 Adjustments in the Brush Creator

I'm using broad brush strokes and not looking to render any fine detail on the Moon Folk, but some of my brush choices such as the Smeary Flat brush are struggling when I decrease my brush size. I open the Brush Creator and have a look at the settings and, after perusing the online help, I get them working just right by decreasing the 'Feature' setting. I still don't find the Brush Creator as intuitive as Photoshop's Brushes palette, but there's a lot going on with Painter's brushes that's beyond my simple brain, and Painter's brushes can do some lovely things. I'm quite content to fiddle with the Brush Creator to find the right effect.



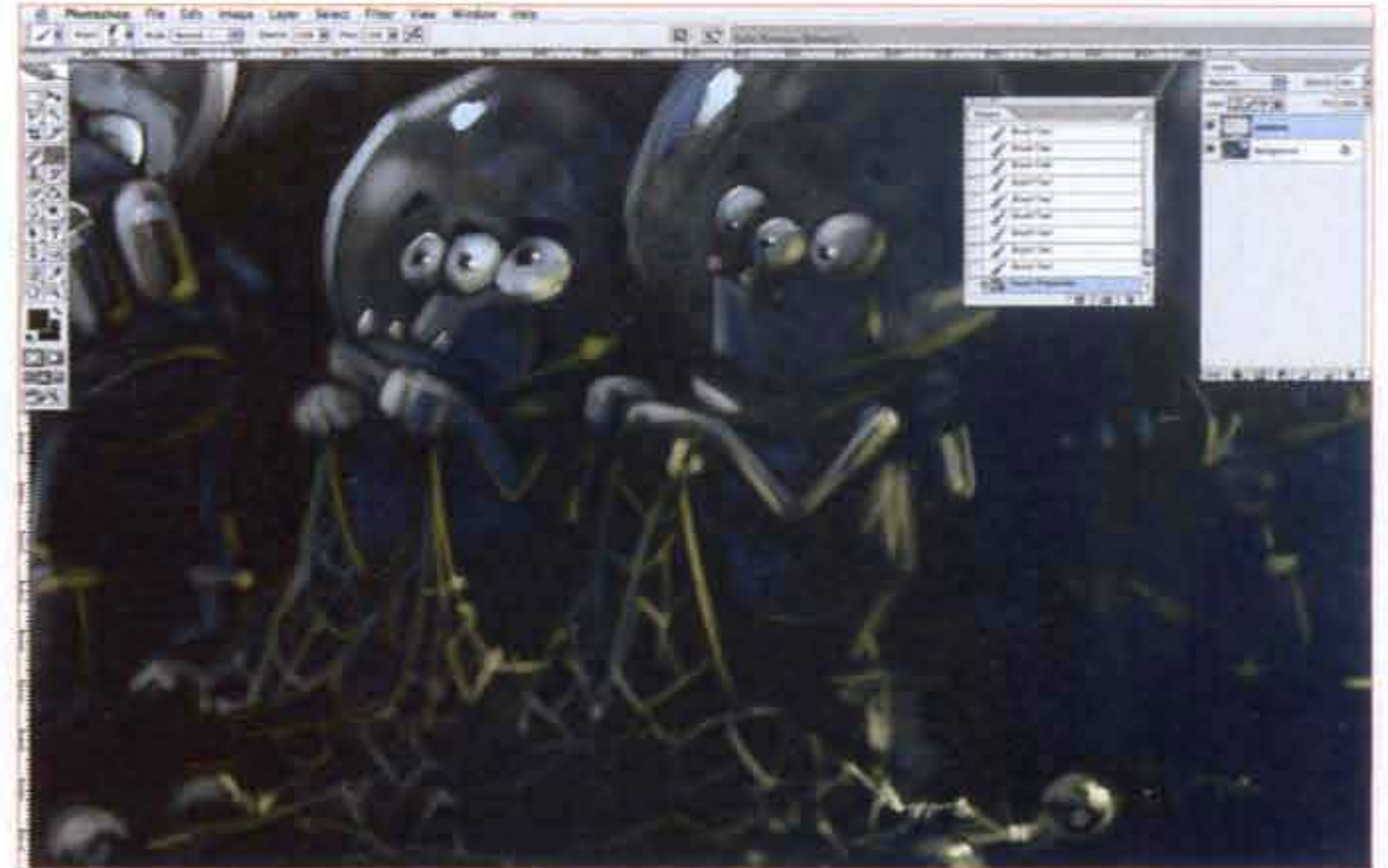
## 13 An eerie glow

One of the Moon Folk is actually coming up through the surface of the moon, so I decide to add a limited light source below. I go for a yellow light and paint in some crude suggestion of how this light is affecting the aliens and the rocks at the surface. Again, I'm not looking for an accurate representation of lighting, but a stylised interpretation that fits with the rest of the image. I make a mental note to include some shadows cast on the rock by the aliens later.

## PAINTER VS PHOTOSHOP

I've produced three illustrations in Painter, with a little help from Photoshop. I'm not sure I want to pitch one package against the other, because I think the most surprising outcome was how well Photoshop and Painter IX.5 work together. With both programs open, it's quick and easy to move an image between them and take advantage of each package's strengths. Painter can't duplicate the tactile nature of real paint or impose the same limitations; it's the limitations of certain media that often produce the qualities that are so appealing. The roughness of chalk or the clumsiness of a thick oil brush is very different to the precision of an airbrush, and they force an artist to work in a different way. The results have certain recognisable qualities that an audience respond to. While reproducing real media effects in Photoshop always seems a bit self-conscious, Painter goes some way to recreating those limitations and enables artists to work in a similar way to real media, albeit with a different input device. There'll always be a big difference between painting with a Wacom and the real thing, but Painter IX is as close as you'll get on a computer.





**Shortcuts**  
**Show Brush Creator**  
**Ctrl+B (PC)**  
**Apple+B (Mac)**  
 The Brush Creator is incredibly useful for making changes to how Painter's brushes behave.

## 14 Moon buggy

I have a bit of fun with the moon buggy, which I keep simple and blocky. It's less of a moon buggy and more of a dune buggy with a radar dish. I'm not entirely sure how it could've survived the crash, but the illustration is riddled with inconsistencies that I'm just not worried about. It's stylised, it's daft and I'm having fun. I don't want to get hung up on thoughts like, "oh, but what if someone notices that Chimpski's not got space boots on...?" However, I am bothered by Chimpski's wonky arm...

## 15 A wonky arm

I'm willing to take liberties with Chimpanzee anatomy, but Chimpski looks like he's dislocated his shoulder in the crash. I make a flying visit to Photoshop where I do a couple of Free Transforms on the wonky arm (making sure that the background colour in the tool box is the same as the sky) and then head straight back into Painter to paint over the cracks.

## 16 A more eerie glow?

I'm also concerned that the aliens are too well illuminated and the lighting is a little bland, so I bounce back to Photoshop and create an Adjustment Layer to bring down the brightness and bump up the saturation. This helps give a

## PRO SECRETS

### Adjusting scanned drawings

Once a drawing has been scanned it will normally need some adjustment. If you're assembling an image from a number of scans, such as joining two A4 scans into one A3, then do the alignment first and then merge the layers, before adjusting levels or contrast. Photoshop has all the tools you could need to adjust a scan, but I find that Image>Adjustments>Levels works well, particularly on black and white work. I also use Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation or Image>Adjustments>Brightness/Contrast or a combination of all three.

retro sci-fi look with the green cast to the lighting from beneath the moon's surface. I paint out most of the Adjustment Layer by painting in black on its accompanying mask leaving the green cast and some shadows of the helmets on the rock. When I'm happy, I merge down, because Painter doesn't support Adjustment Layers, and move back into Painter.



## 17 More Chimpski details

The illustration's almost finished and I dart around adding finishing touches, such as a postcard of the Kremlin to Chimpski Junior, a pencil in Chimpski's hand (which I originally painted in completely the wrong position!), the helmet lettering and the hammer and sickle emblem on the soviet flag. I rather bravely paint all of this straight onto the background, but I've found that most of Painter's brushes work much better when you're working into underlying colours and this helps with the painterly feel to the illustration.

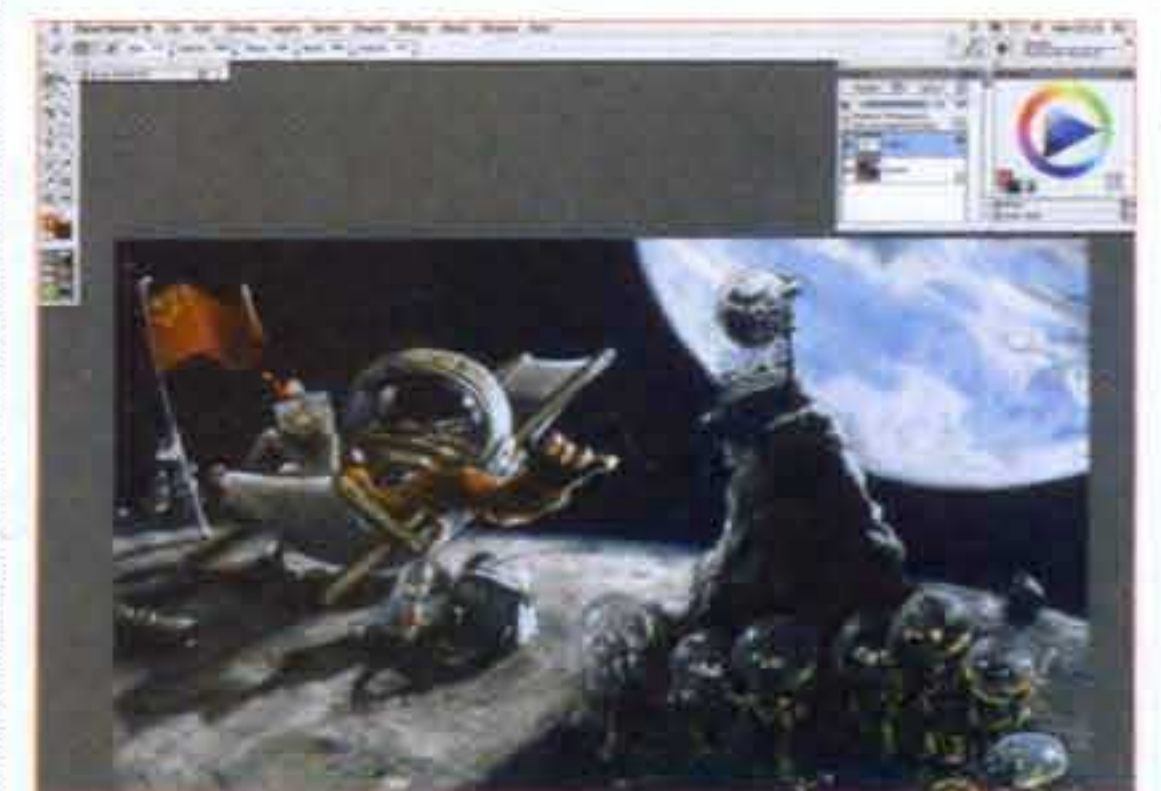
## 18 Tightening up the Moon Folk

One of the final touches is the net being held by the two very nervous-looking Moon Folk. I'd been avoiding this early on because I wasn't sure how I wanted to render the complexities of a net, but I slap

down some quick lines in various local colours that I select with Colour Picker and it seems to fit perfectly. I'm not sure it'll fit Chimpski, but that's a problem for the aliens, not me.

## 19 Finishing touches

I leave Chimpski overnight. In previous workshops I've mentioned the value in leaving your work so that you can look at it with fresh eyes. And I notice a few things that need changing. I make some changes to Chimpski's visor and include some suggestion of the reflected soviet flag. I also add some reflected colour to Chimpski's brow and his feet. I make a few more minor tweaks here and there, including some more adjustments to the wonky arm, until I'm satisfied the picture is finished.

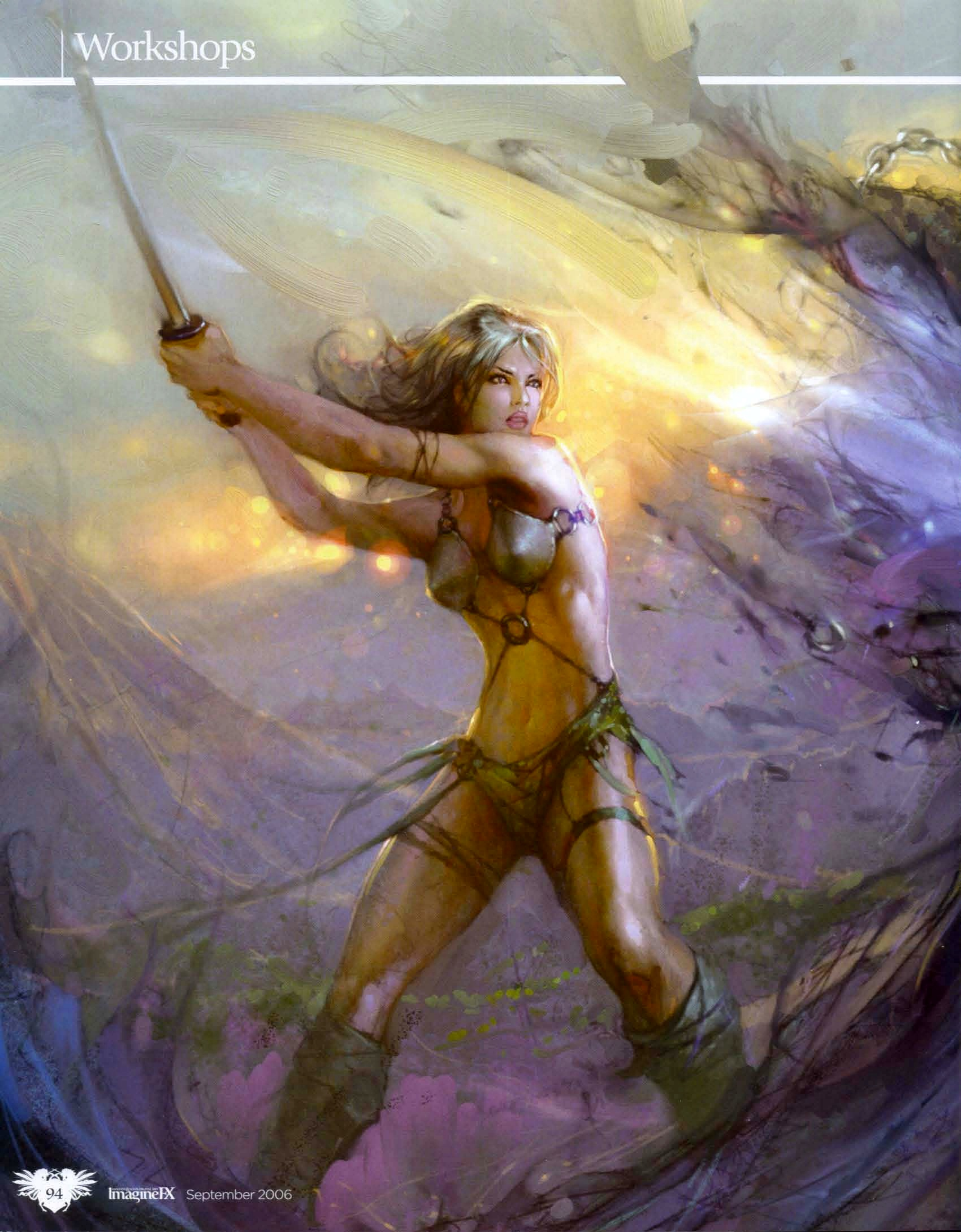


## 20 After effects

This workshop in particular has shown that I can use Painter effectively alongside Photoshop in my workflow. I've got an awful lot to learn about Painter, but its capabilities have already got my creative juices flowing. The objective of these three workshops was to familiarise myself with Painter, integrate it into my workflow, record my progress and encourage other ImagineFX readers to have a dabble. On a personal level I've accomplished my goals, and I can't wait to produce more work with Painter. ●









## Photoshop & ArtRage

### Artist PROFILE

#### Viktor Titov

COUNTRY: Russia

CLIENTS: Ballistic

Publishing, Imaginism

Studios, Kostin Publishing



Viktor Titov is 22 years old and hails from Russia. He began

working as a character animator in a game development team while still a student at art college and has since worked for a video production firm as an animator. He has a passion for 2D art and creates pictures in his spare time.

<http://hamsterfly.cgsociety.org>



#### DVD Assets

The files you need are on the DVD

**FILES:** art rage output.tif, Continuation of detailing.tif, fin\_comp.tif, first detailing.tif, last sketch.tif, non uniform texture.tif, painting over artrage.tif

#### SOFTWARE:

Photoshop CS2 (Demo)  
ArtRage 2 (Demo)

# CREATING A BATTLE SCENE

**Viktor Titov** reveals his digital techniques and working methods when creating his epic fantasy illustrations

**A**s an artist, what do you do when you have plenty of free time and feel like painting a gargantuan battle scene? To start, you might normally just grab a pencil and a sheet of paper and get right down to work, but before that I'd recommend that you concoct a picture in your head of what exactly you plan to draw. It may be an enormous and cruel orc, throwing away its enemies like rag dolls, or a proud Amazonian man astride a horse, poised just before a crucial attack. You're picturing this scene in detail now, aren't you?

In the following workshop you'll be able to take into consideration some methods and techniques that I have used in the artwork that you see here, called Life and Death.

I'll show you how I work with the layers in Photoshop. You will also become acquainted with my methods for using brushes as well as my usage of some other programs that connect well with Photoshop.

Along the way, I will try to best explain and show how it's possible to achieve the expressiveness of images with the help of colour and light.





## 1 Setting the idea and composition

When sketching I usually start with a paper and a pencil, but this time I am applying my sketch ideas straight on my Wacom Intuos2 and Photoshop. Usually, I'll draw several variants of a composition, but for this piece I have decided in favour of just one. As you can see, I work over a line drawing without much detail, leaving some space for further colour searching. It often turns out that after the coloured sketches, I'll need to make some changes to the main shapes and the arrangement of the objects in the picture.

## 2 Colour sketching

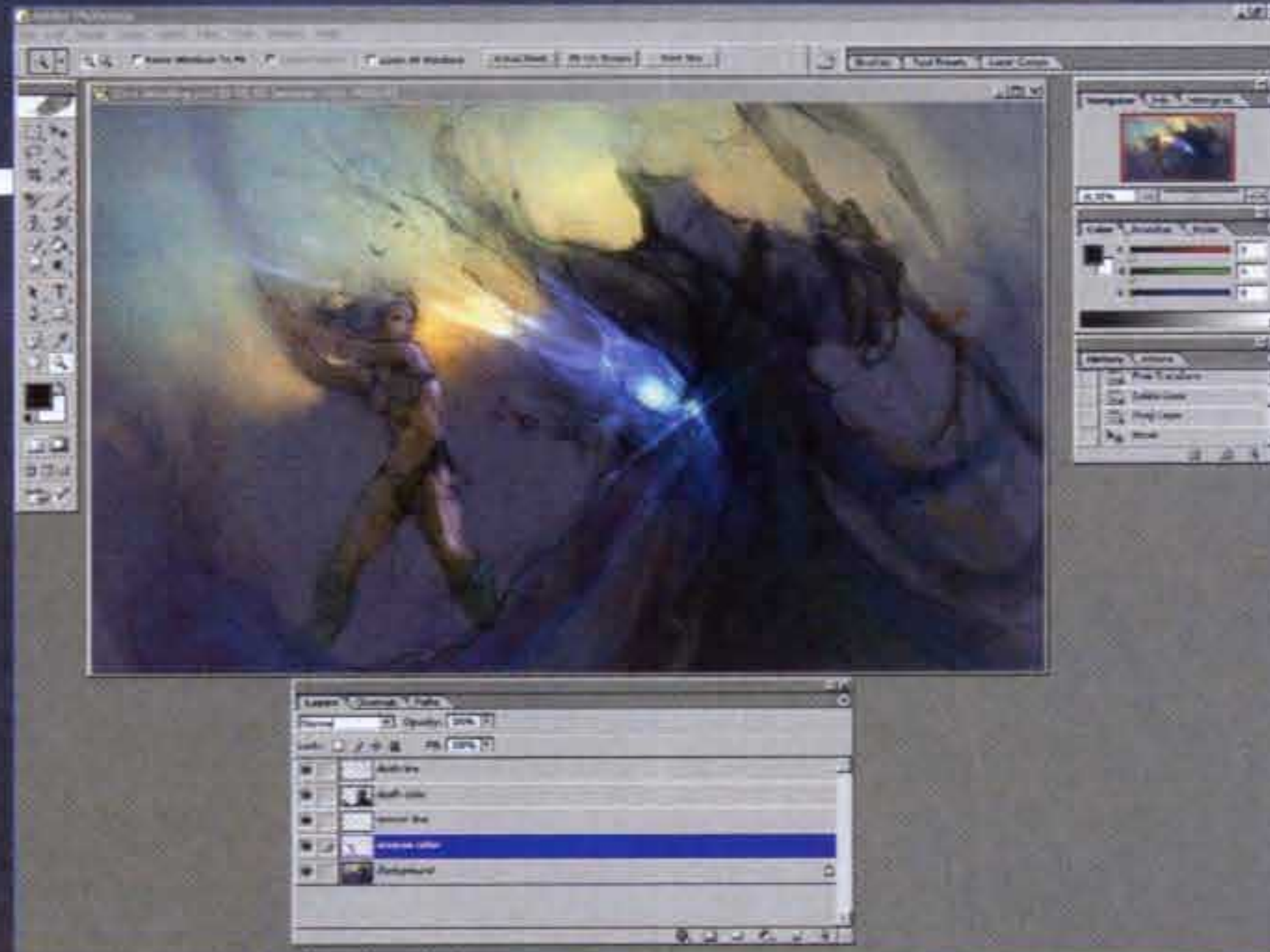
Now it's time to proceed to the colour. I usually make a good number of variants of the colour solution to any picture, just to see what looks best. Even the same scene may be rendered in a completely different way. For example, you may imagine the scene laid in a dark vault with lit torches and the light coming through from above; or it may be early morning or evening; the sun can be shining brightly; the weather can be damp and foggy. In this case I am attracted by the variant with the warm evening sky and a far away rocky landscape, sunk into a blueish smoke.



## PRO SECRETS

### Get rid of white

I advise to start drawing with a light grey background and not with a white background, because your eyes will perceive the lines better and get less tired. It also helps that there's colour on the page, so that you're not staring at a blank screen.



## 3 Arranging layers

Now I've finished with adding colour for a while, I can start arranging the layers in Photoshop. First, I divide the line drawing into two layers, I call the first one 'death line', and the second 'woman line'. One is at the top, the other is right below it. I make the colour sketch as a preliminary background having cut the girl's figure and the figure of death. I place them accordingly under the line drawing. By doing it this way I am able to correct the colour spectrum of each figure independently of the background.



## 4 Creating your own brush

I now mark the main shapes of the landscape in the background and emphasise the lit part with more colour. I also use different brushes: firstly, the brush in a maple tree's leaf shape, and then some other brushes that I made myself. Here's how I made one of the brushes: I opened up a new file of 100x100 pixels and applied several chaotically placed spots on the surface, then go to Edit>Define Brush preset. Then, in the Brush menu I select Brush Dynamics and Shape Dynamics. You can see the results of this brush in the background and also on the figure of the ghost.

## 5 Continuation of detailing

I want to bring in a little more colour variety into the figure of death, and



emphasise the girl's figure with some contrasting spots. I also decide to draw the clouds using the colour palette from the picture. Now I apply a new layer for the death figure, which is going to be above the line drawing – I do this to get rid of the lines as well as to achieve greater vividness. On this layer I work over the additional illumination of the figure. To make a chain around the figure of death's torso: first, I draw the main shapes of the chain links with dark shades that are close to black. Then I use the brush that has Vivid Light effects to place bright glares.

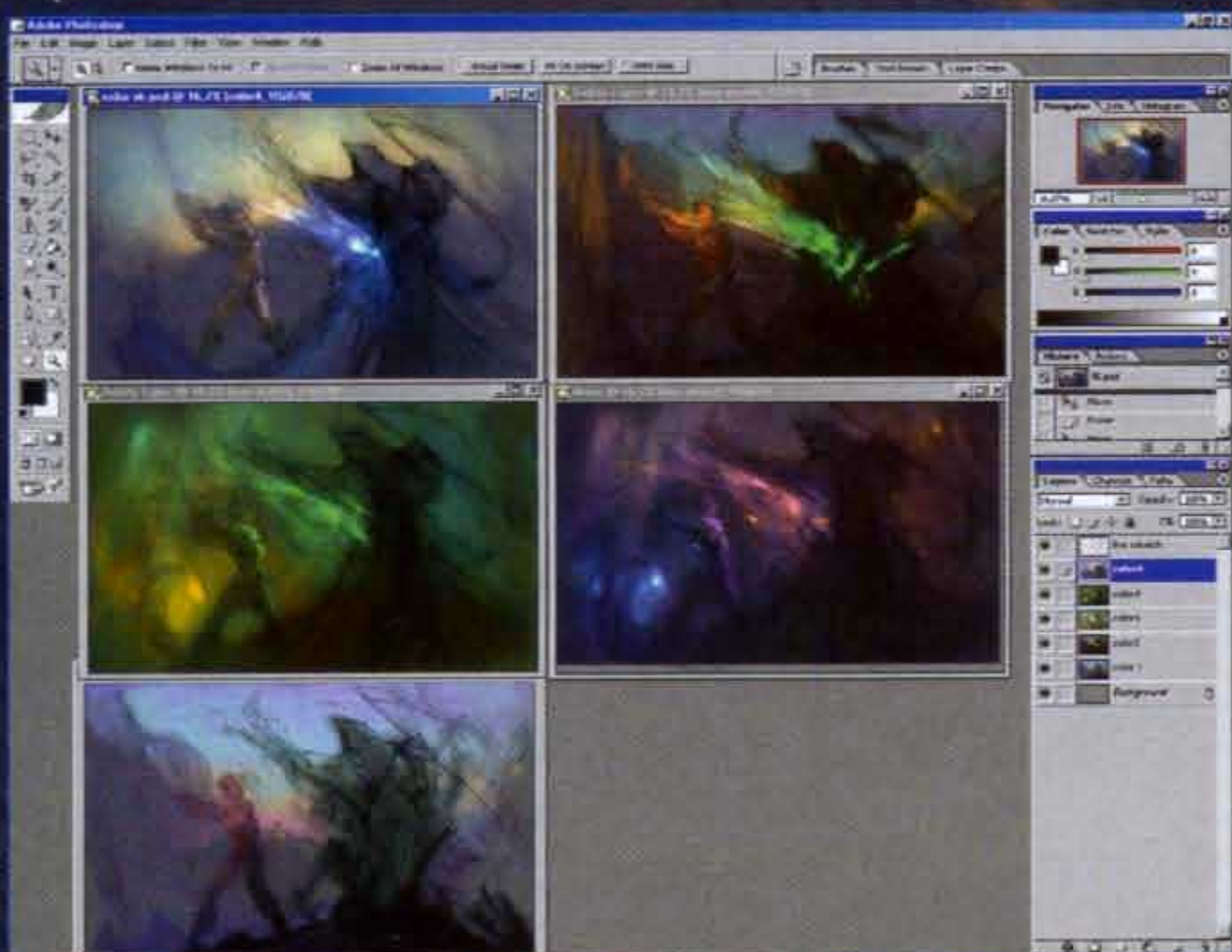


## 6 Detailing the girl

I begin to work in detail to the girl's figure, using the help of a simple Round brush and the Blur tool. To highlight muscles and movement on the figure I apply warm tones on the shadow and cool tones where the figure is well-lit. When drawing the metal armour, I use a Soft Light and Vivid Light brush in turns, working over the different shades and glares. At this stage, I create a little yellow glare from the sky on the figure and armour outline, but without making it too explicit. For the hair I accentuate the common mass and the ringlets with a wide Hard-edged brush.

## 7 Creating texture

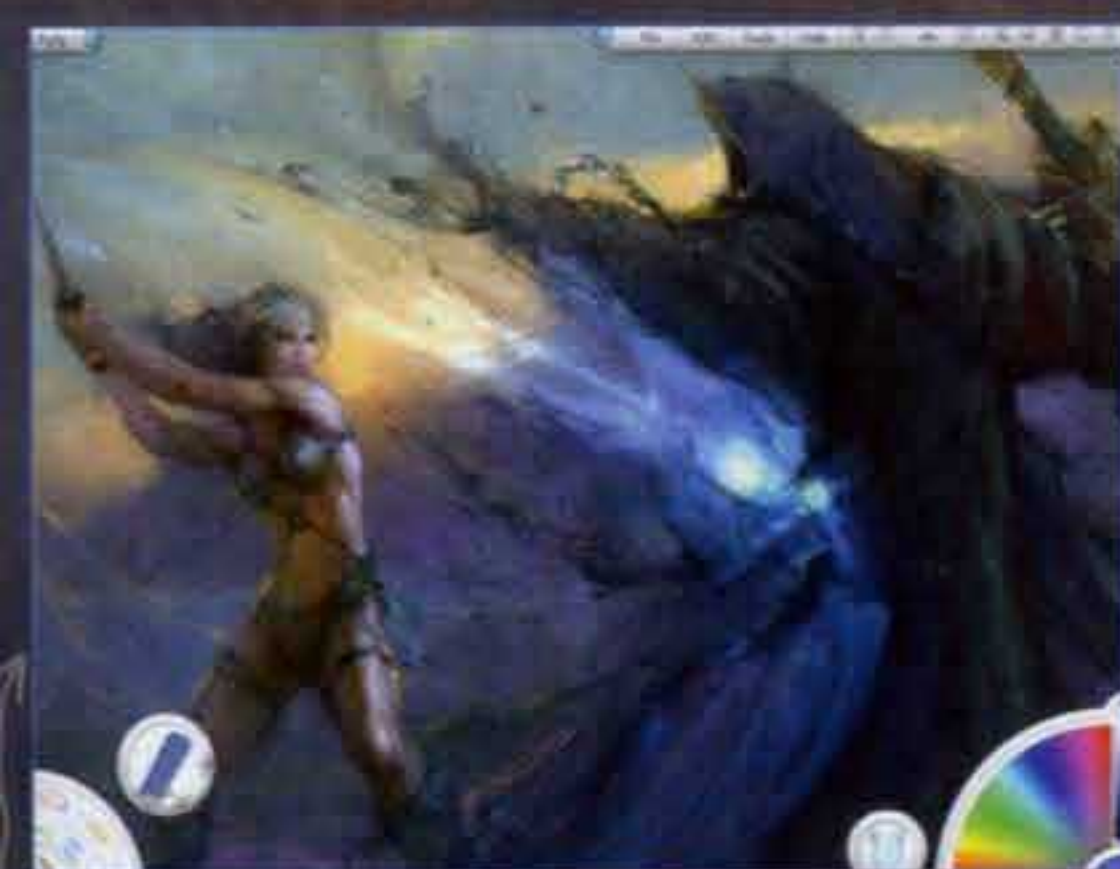
Having achieved the desired effect with the addition of details, I make up a Soft Light effect layer, which helps to soften the lines that I drew earlier. And,







with the help of different brushes, I create an interesting texture that makes the whole canvas much more diverse and detailed. This, I believe, adds a little charm and style to my artwork and makes it a more interesting and desirable spectacle for the viewer.



of some of the ArtRage layers where the strokes are too heavy so I can reveal the texture underneath.

## 10 Unfinished details

On a new layer I paint in the finer details, such as the clothes folds in the foreground, and the face and the hair of the girl need to be finished too. I paint these using standard tools like the Round brush and Smudge tool. Now I want to work over the background. I create a layer with the soft light effect and paint some

transparent blue fog, which casts over the distant mountains.

## 11 Finishing work

I make up one more layer and add a vivid light effect. On this surface I'll try a blue flash spangle, sparkling in different directions. I do this using a simple Round brush with a soft fringe and Vivid Light mode. It's possible to select the colours of the luminescence manually – from dark blue to white – but it takes far too much time. Here, I also draw small pieces and patches of cloth, scattering in the direction of a gust of wind. To imitate the dynamics of these particles I use the Filter Motion blur. When I finish this, I paint on the layer a light yellow/orange in the sky just behind the girl's figure and somewhere in the clouds, with sunshine lighting the body and armour. This seems to make the work complete and gives an impression of detailed elaboration. So here it is – and to my mind it's pretty good. I wish you all luck and inspiration with your work. ●



## 8 Painting in ArtRage

Now I save the work in the BMP format and open it in the ArtRage program. It's a wonderful program that can make me feel as if I'm painting with real brushes and oils. At this stage I try to underline the colour contrasts when it's necessary: eg, I work over light spaces around the characters. I also apply some stains on highlighted folds of the clothes. It's very important not to over saturate the work with these touches. In the dark spaces I leave the texture as it is.

## 9 Reverting back

Now I save the work in BMP format again, and go back into Photoshop once more. Here, as we can't use too many layers because the file sizes are large, I suggest placing it as a separate upper layer on the last variant of the picture. I merge all the layers into one, which makes the file size smaller and the work much simpler. I create the layer mask to get rid





# Artist insight

# FIGURE DRAWING

PART  
2

Learn how to create a digital figure study in Photoshop using an approach that relies on shapes and tonal values. By **Joel Carlo**

**T**here are many techniques available when you're creating a figure study, and a wide range of mediums that you can use when creating your work. But, whether you choose a traditional or digital route, a basic understanding of figure drawing fundamentals is essential for you to progress to creating more believable and life-like figures, and one of these fundamentals is the subject of form.

Like most artists, my introduction to drawing the human figure was based on the use of lines. It wasn't until I began to comprehend the relationship

between form and tonal value that I discovered an easy approach to creating more convincing portrayals of the human body. Today, this is the approach I rely on when creating the majority of my figure studies.

My aim is to introduce you to this non-linear way of creating your figure drawings. You'll learn how to break down an image to 'see' basic shapes, and analyse the tonal values of a subject in order to draw or paint them in a more convincing manner. I'll be using are Photoshop, a Wacom tablet, and photo references made available by [www.modelalisa.com](http://www.modelalisa.com) (on your DVD).

## Artist PROFILE

**Joel Carlo**

**COUNTRY:** US

**CLIENTS:** NASCAR, Dodge, Toyota and Fox Television



Joel Carlo (aka 'Mecha Hate Chimp') is a freelance artist working

out of Denver, Colorado. His client list is varied, and ranges from commissioned work for small studio projects to larger commissions for the clients listed above.



### DVD Assets

The files you need are on the DVD

**FOLDERS:** Aldo Magalia mega 404, Aldo mega 400, Flora sepia 104, Oona sepia 107, Rhonda Marco sepia 152

**SOFTWARE:**

Photoshop CS2 (Demo)



## 1 ANALYSING FORM

Understanding form is an exercise in both visual and analytical comprehension. Being able to effectively analyse and recreate the lit and shadowed areas of a form enables you to reveal features such as the size,

age and sex of a figure more accurately. And, while the positive and negative areas created by light and shadow may change in a form, these areas must be of the correct size and shape in order to create an accurate resemblance.

## 2 SHAPE VERSUS LINE

In this example (above right) I've created two headshots: one based on shape and the other with lines. In the line drawing, there's a tendency to develop details in form early on, which can sometimes lead to errors with proportions, while the shape-based drawing gives you a quicker and more balanced representation of the subject. Being able to 'see' shapes as masses





relative to one another enables you to better gauge your form and proportions, while lessening the risk that you might develop your image incorrectly.



## 3 BREAKING IT DOWN

Being able to **recognise and distinguish shapes** by tonal value can seem tricky at first, but as you continue to work in this way it will become more intuitive. Remember that there are shapes within shapes, and these shapes in turn create even more shapes. If this all seems a bit daunting, try to think of it as **one big jigsaw puzzle**. The key point is to start by recognising and developing the largest shapes first, the mid-sized shapes next, and the smallest shapes last.

## 4 CHOOSING A REFERENCE

I begin by bringing up several of the figure reference movies that you'll find

on the DVD, and browse through each model: what I'm looking for is a shot of a pose with good lighting that complements the model's figure and features. Once I decide on a pose, I enlarge the movie to screen resolution and then take a screen shot and bring into Photoshop.

## 5 PREPARING THE WORK AREA

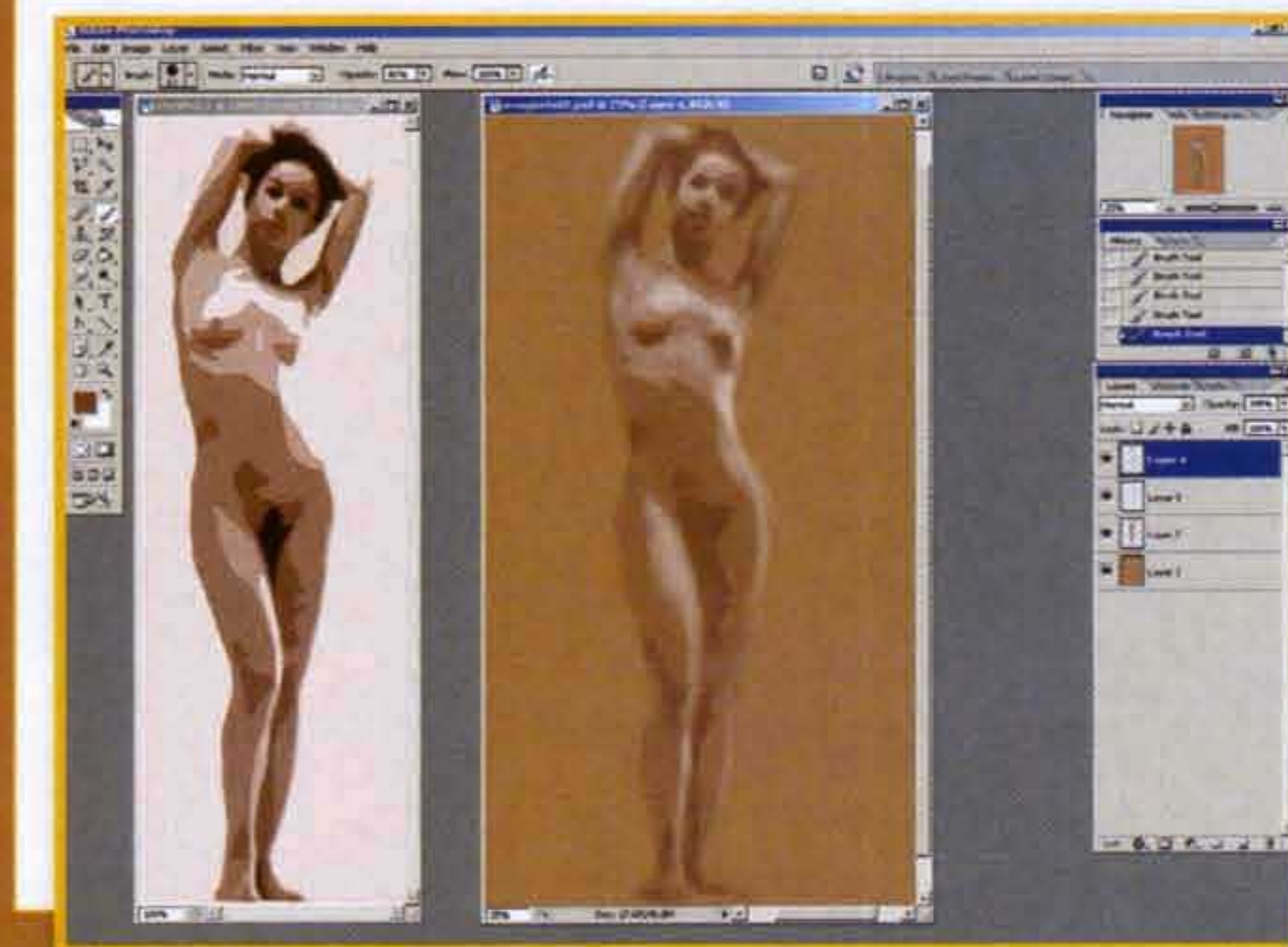
Once in Photoshop, I crop the model, and then make a slight Levels adjustment in order to give the image **more contrast**. This enables me to see the light and shadow placements more easily, and prepare the image for the next step. I duplicate the Background layer, and apply the Cutout filter (Filter>Artistic>Cutout).

## 6 THE CUTOUT FILTER

The Cutout filter is a great tool, which among other things can be used to break down an image into simple tonal shapes. This helps you to 'see' larger tonal masses and their placement within an image, while indirectly creating a simplified colour palette for you to use. For this photo a Number of Levels setting of '5' gives a good balance of large to mid-size shapes.



“Being able to recognise and distinguish shapes by tonal value can seem tricky at first, but it will become more intuitive”



## 7 THE SILHOUETTE

Having applied the filter I create a new file, and choose a background colour of mid-value range that complements my colour palette. I create a new layer, and using a colour from the filtered reference I begin to draw out a rough silhouette using a standard rounded brush with a smooth opacity fade. I keep the file close to the reference image in order to better gauge my silhouette's shape and alignment.



## 8 EVALUATING THE TONAL AREAS

With my silhouette complete, I now begin to evaluate the positions of the various tonal areas in my reference image, beginning with the largest ones. Once I'm comfortable with their placement in the image, I create another layer, and begin to draw these shapes over the silhouette.

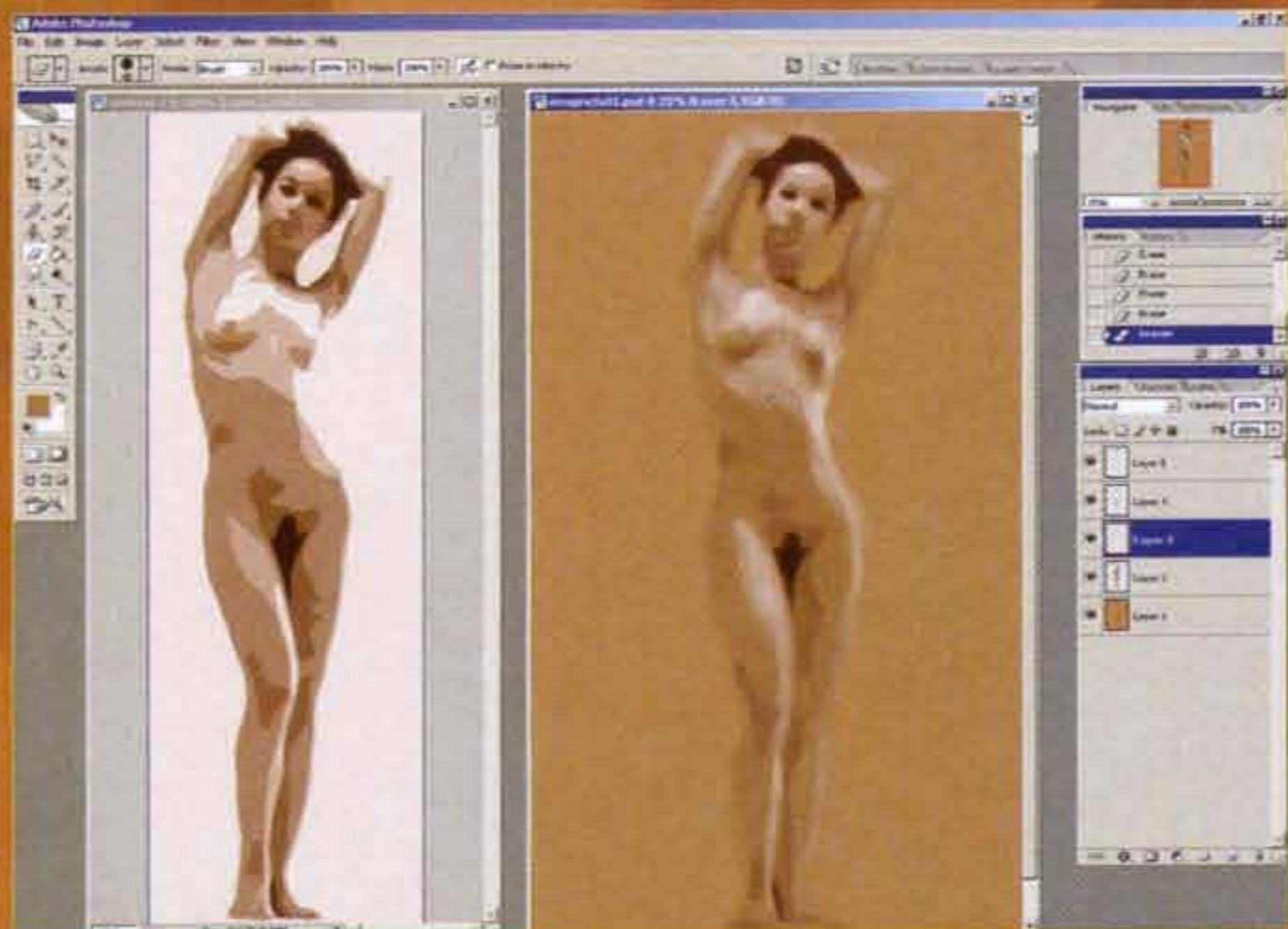
## 9 LAYING DOWN THE SHAPES

Each shape is drawn in a hierarchical manner, by establishing the **largest areas first** and then working my way down to the mid-sized shapes next, and the smallest shapes last. I **carefully draw** each area incrementally, using new layers, and only move to the next when I feel the previous areas have been established correctly.



## 10 PROPORTION AND ALIGNMENT

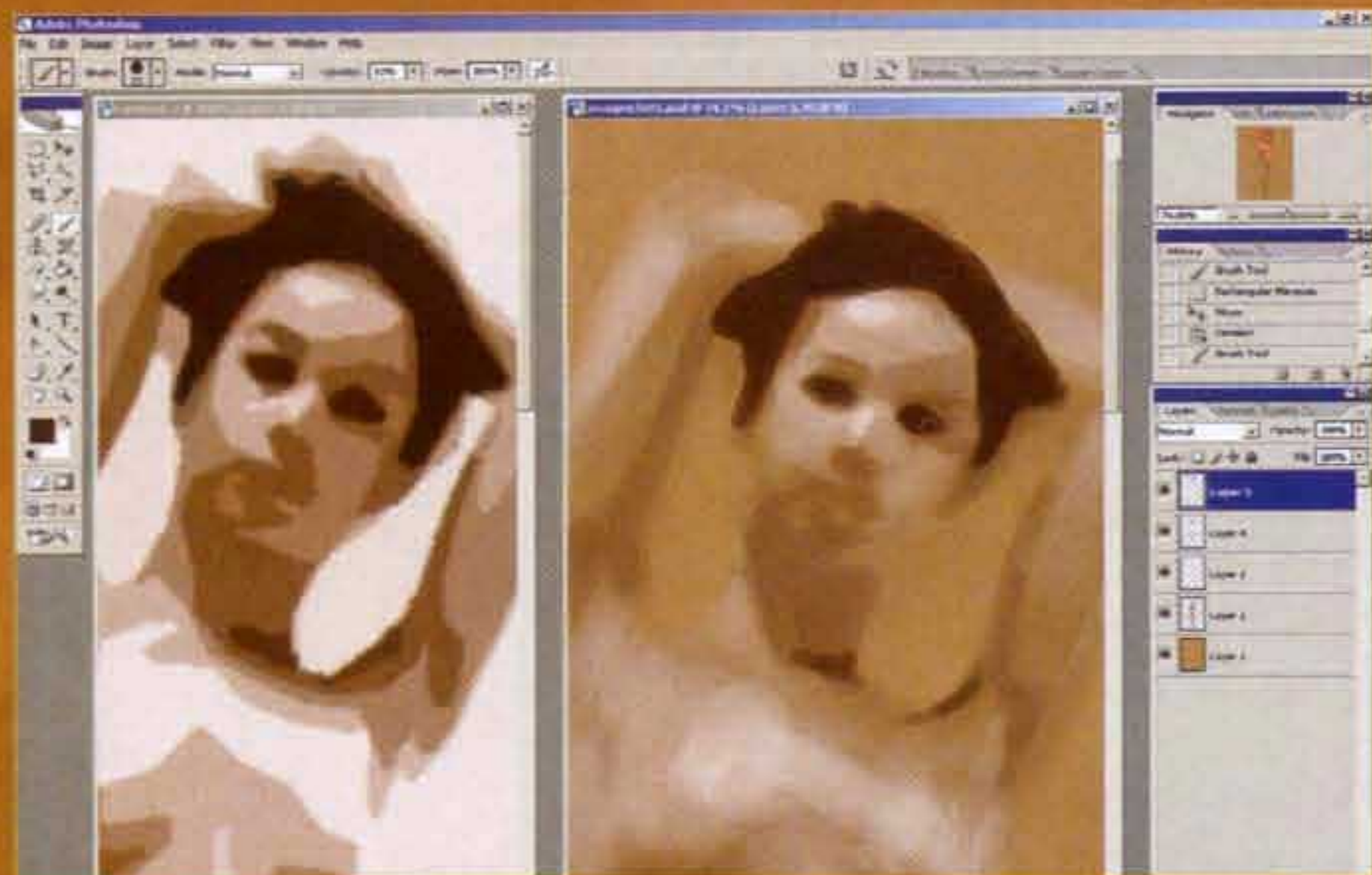
Once I've established a solid foundation of shapes, I begin to check for overall **proportion and alignment**. Aligning shapes over existing tonal masses will create additional shapes, and this is why establishing a shape's proportion correctly is extremely important. If a large area is off, each successive area within it will also be off.



“As I define my figure, I periodically flip my canvas to evaluate the image from a different perspective”

## 11 REFINING SHAPES

When I'm satisfied with the overall proportion and alignment of the shapes in my rough, I carefully begin to refine the outer edges of each tonal mass. I continue to work in this way, referencing each individual shape that I've created against the filtered image, while keeping a careful watch on the placement of each shape in relation to those around it.

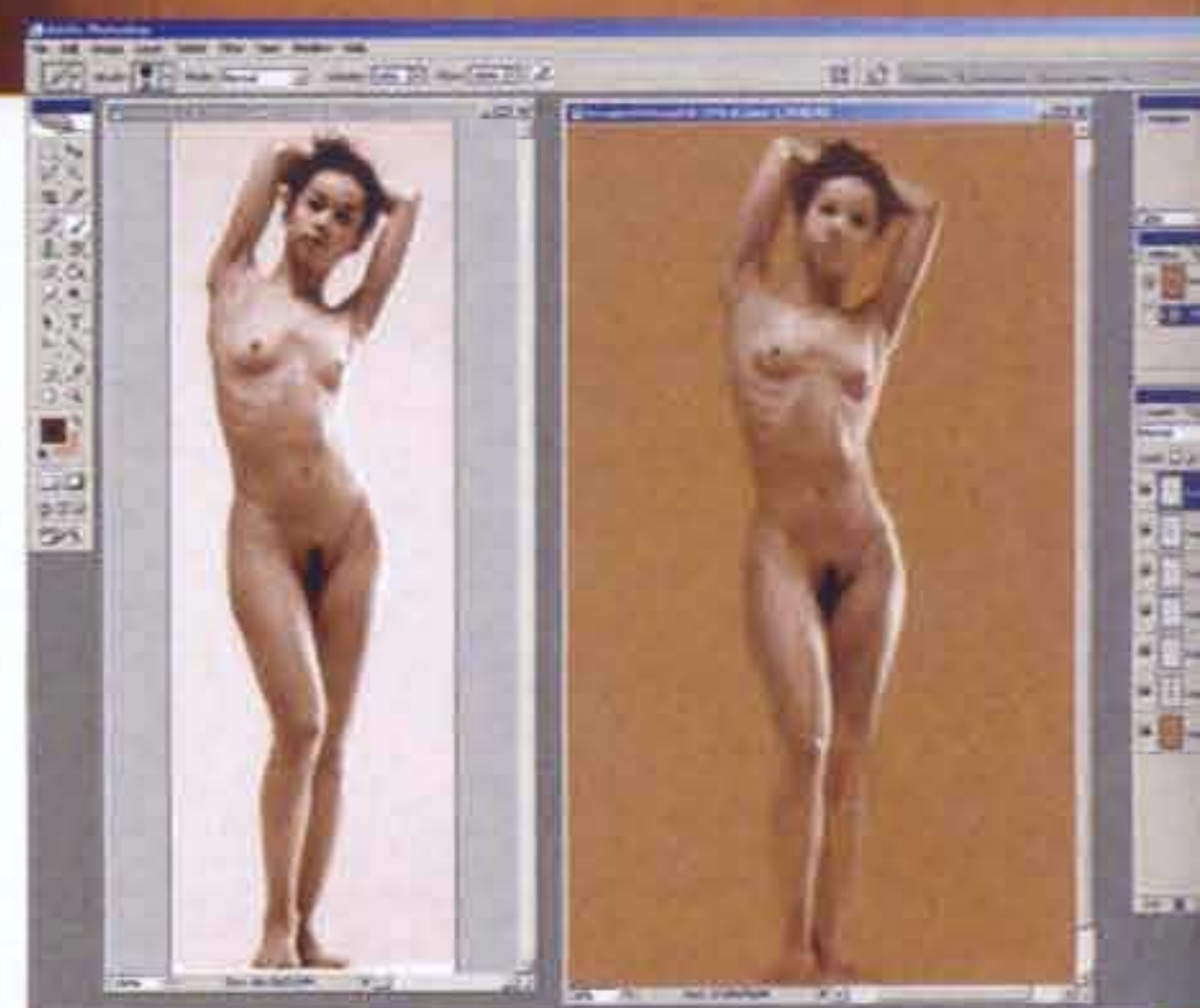


## 12 CREATING FORM THROUGH SMALLER TONAL AREAS

Now that the bulk of my work is complete, I switch back to the original reference photo to begin **developing my form**.

Again using the reference image as a colour palette, I create yet another layer, and carefully start to lay down brush strokes over my established areas to pick out

**subtle differences in tone** revealed in the photo.



## 13 CHECKING FOR DISTORTION

As I gradually define my figure, I periodically flip my canvas to evaluate the image from a different perspective. This enables me to view my work with fresh eyes, and check for any distorted areas that may have developed but which I hadn't noticed.

## 14 FINAL EVALUATION

At this point my image is close to completion. I go back and work through the image, looking for slight differences in tone or shape I may have missed, or could have developed better. I shrink the canvas down to the size of a thumbnail to judge the image's readability, and continue to make adjustments as necessary.



## 15 COMPLETION

Satisfied with my overall effort, I sign my work and consider it a **completed figure study**. I hope that this workshop has been informative, or at least has helped to introduce you to a different approach that can be used when creating your own figure drawings. ●



PART  
HEAD  
AND FACE  
ON SALE  
31 AUG



# FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Reviews

The latest digital art software, hardware, film and book releases...

15  
PRODUCTS  
ON TEST



Martin Duerr talks absolute Dogwaffle – page 102

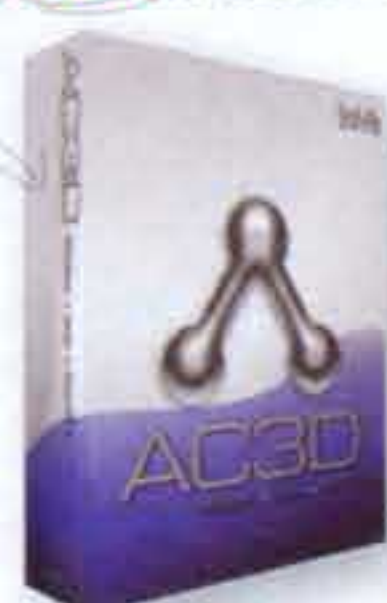
## SOFTWARE

### 102 Project Dogwaffle 3.7

The perfect utility for 2D, 3D and animated content artists?



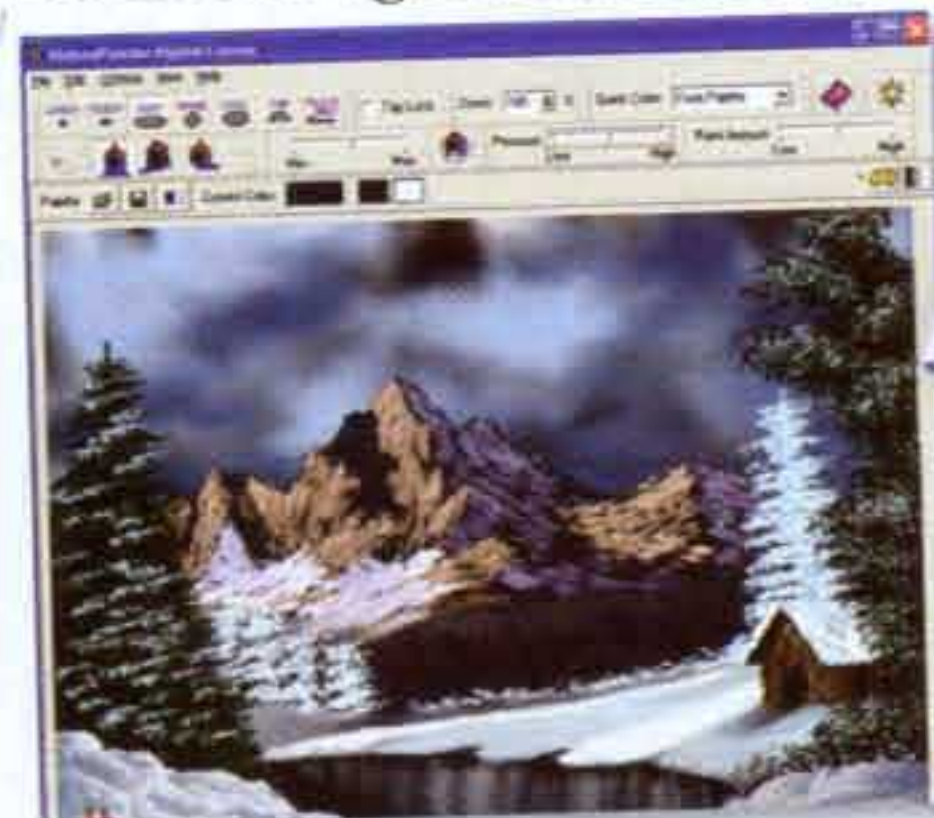
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A budget 3D application that's both accessible and able to handle very complex objects

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“If you love concept art, it's definitely worth a look”

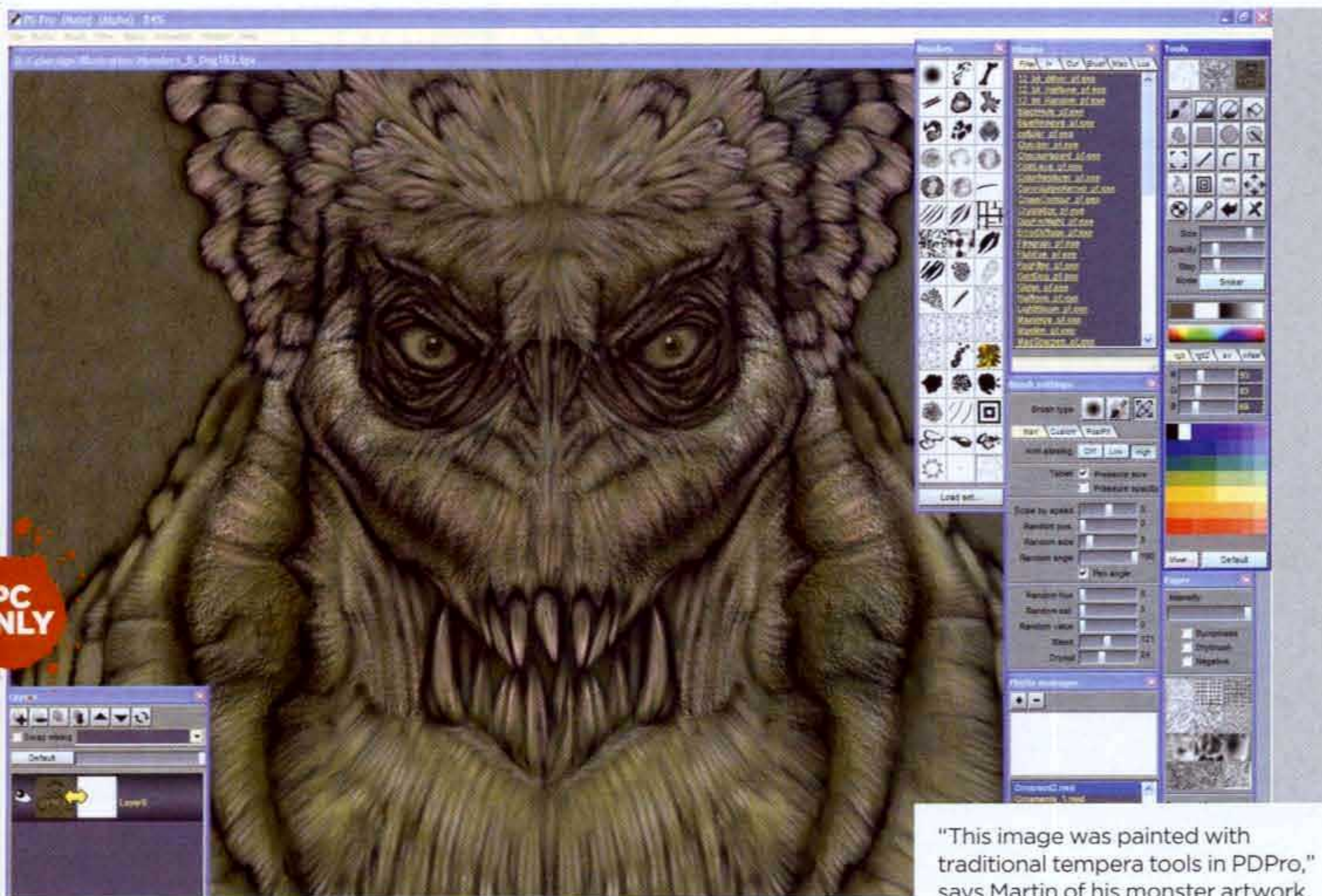
RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious





"In terms of this monster portrait, PD Pro was advantageous because I could use, or build up my own custom brushes and also apply them with some depth," reveals Martin.





"This image was painted with traditional tempera tools in PDPro," says Martin of his monster artwork.

## Project Dogwaffle 3.7

**PAINT PROGRAM** More than just another paint package, the updated Project Dogwaffle provides an essential utility for artists

**PRICE** £60 **COMPANY** FastTrak **WEB** [www.fasttrak.co.uk](http://www.fasttrak.co.uk) **CONTACT** 01923 495496

**T**ake a quick inventory of your most frequently used applications and you'll probably come up with a variety of pixel-pushing programs, all of which are designed to carry out a specific function. Photoshop may be your foundation, whereas something like Painter takes over when you want to emulate natural media, for example. Each application has its strengths, which, when combined, make up your artistic arsenal.

PD Pro, or Project Dogwaffle, is one of those rare applications that's inexpensive and very powerful – and a whole load of fun. In some artist cases, it has replaced Photoshop and Painter as their main painting tool. The depth of features in this app is incredible, the only problem is finding them, as the app can prove a little idiosyncratic in its choice of menu and tool names.

This has thankfully been addressed in the latest release, with 3.7 getting the horribly confusing Buffer menu renamed to Image. The interface is also cleaner and easier to navigate. You really get the feeling that this application is still being developed by those who truly love it.

New features in 3.7 include Colour Picker mode on stored images to aid drawing from a reference photo, a High Pass filter and some tweaks to various filters, including faster Wave Displace and Fish Eye effects.



While Project Dogwaffle isn't as immediately intuitive as say, Photoshop Elements or Painter Essentials, if you're willing to put the effort in, you'll find a

much more powerful tool for the digital artist than either of these budget apps.

Constant development (and free updates) means that you're getting a lot of value for your hard-earned cash.

### DETAILS

#### Features

- Realistic art tools with tablet support
- Custom and procedural anti-aliased brushes
- Over 100 effects filters
- Bluescreen, greenscreen and colour keying
- Full alpha channel support
- Keyframe-based timeline editor
- Onion skin for traditional animation
- Paint and animate particles
- Customisable interface

#### System Requirements

**PC:** Windows 98SE/2000/XP, 700MHz CPU/28 RAM



### ARTIST PROFILE

## MARTIN DUERR

*After studying graphic design Martin turned freelance, creating CG for 2D and 3D projects*

**What is your artistic background, and what is your preferred method of working?**

Initially I was self-taught, and then after leaving school I studied graphic design. I often combine traditional natural art materials with digital tools, for example by sketching and colouring on 'real' paper before scanning the work into my computer and enhancing it using digital tools.

**Which features do you most like in Project Dogwaffle?**

I most like the simple structure of the program, but under the bonnet there are some extremely powerful tools. Dogwaffle is my preferred tool for painting digitally, plus I can work with animated brushes too.

**What are the key improvements in the current version?**

There's no one feature that stands out for me – it's the overall combination of filters and the animation, painting and compositing tools.

**What other software do you use regularly in your work?**

Gertrudis, TwistedBrush for 2D work (painting, sketching, and producing concept art), LightWave and Modo for 3D modelling and animation.

**What does Project Dogwaffle provide that other titles don't?**

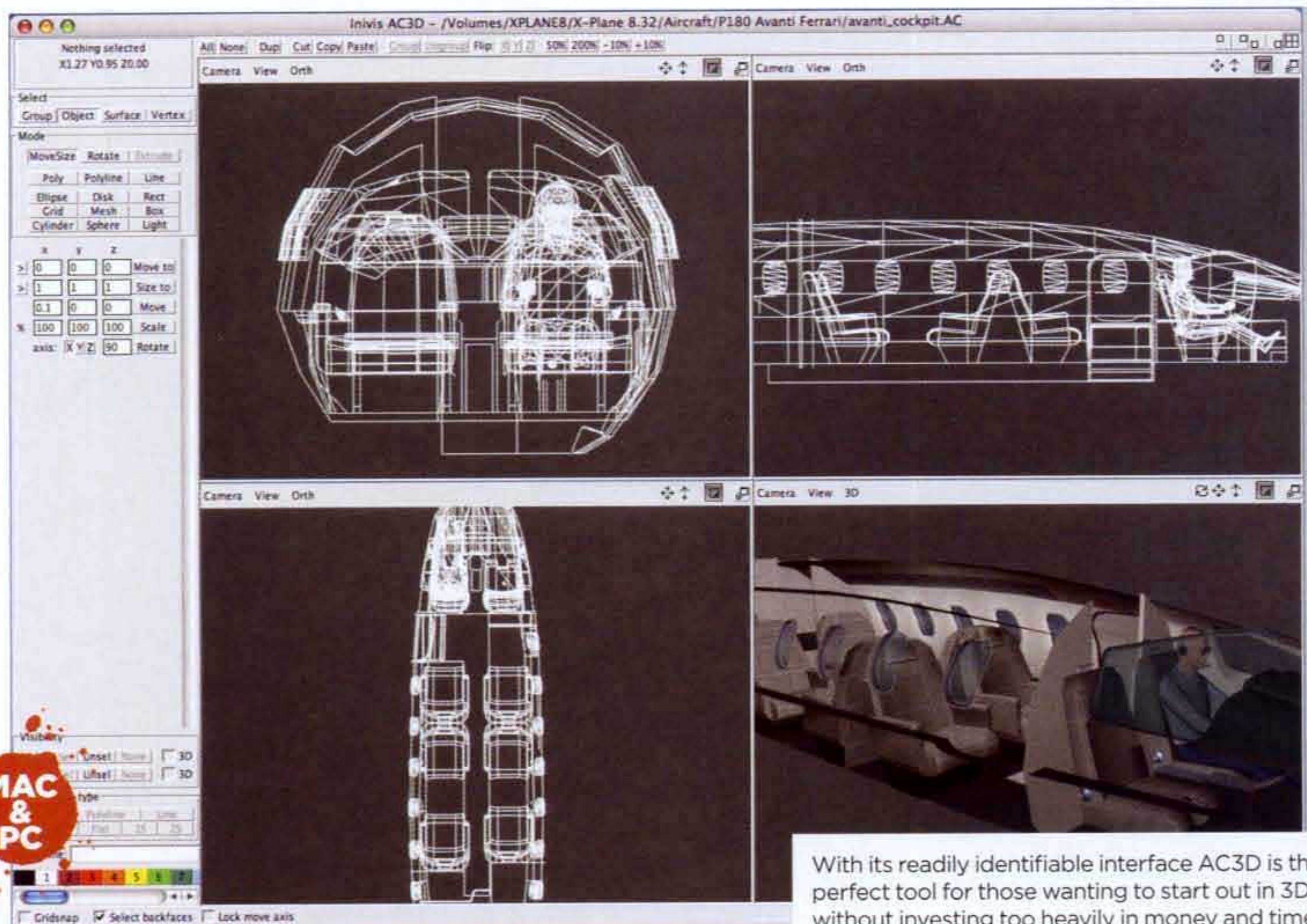
I like Dogwaffle because it has a mixture of traditional painting software, combined with unique animation and compositing features. It also offers a particle system, as well as onion skin and displacement tools, which gives it some unique strengths.



Martin is based in Germany. To see more of his work, visit the link below.

[www.cybersign.de](http://www.cybersign.de)





With its readily identifiable interface AC3D is the perfect tool for those wanting to start out in 3D without investing too heavily in money and time.

## AC3D 6

**3D SOFTWARE** A budget 3D application that has the muscle to create complex objects while remaining approachable for the 3D novice

**PRICE** \$70 **COMPANY** AC3D **WEB** [www.ac3d.org](http://www.ac3d.org) **CONTACT** email via website only

**F**or many, the thought of moving on from 2D artwork into 3D models is a daunting one. Such software is expensive, difficult to learn and results aren't quite as immediate as a few brush strokes on an empty canvas. If this sounds familiar but the idea of giving your artwork a little more substance is still appealing, then AC3D may be the application that helps you get over such a hurdle.

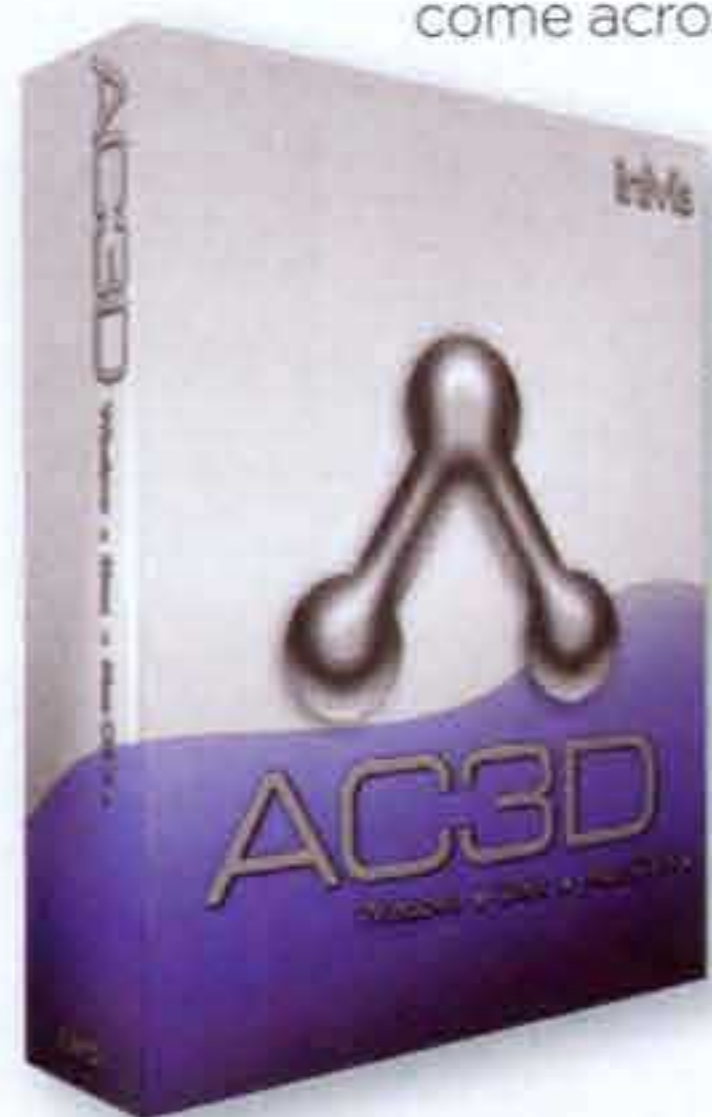
At a price that is unlikely to concern your bank manager, AC3D provides a comprehensive array of 3D modelling tools. But unlike many other competing titles, AC3D reduces screen clutter so you can concentrate on adding and sculpting shapes without being overly concerned with complex algorithms or

coordinates – although such elements can be accessed as you gain confidence and begin to demand more specific tweaks to your emerging shapes.

And with a ten-year history, the software has an active community user base that has influenced its development and gone through numerous upgrades making AC3D more than capable of some impressive results. The same community is on hand via the forum pages if you should come across problems or you may

prefer to watch the growing number of tutorial movies which covers everything from the basics to more creative options such as using subdivision surfaces and adding detail.

AC3D is unlikely to challenge the established heavyweight 3D applications but on a ratio of price for features it can't be beaten.



## DETAILS

### Features

- Simple user interface
- TrueType font 2D and 3D generator
- Integrated graphical texture coordinate editor
- Fast subdivision surface modelling
- Fast real-time OpenGL graphics views
- Multipoint polygon and line editing
- No polygon limits
- Many 3D file formats supported

### System Requirements

**PC:** Windows 95 or later, Pentium 120, 64MB RAM, 10MB HD  
**Mac:** Mac OS X 10.3, 64MB RAM, 10MB HD

### Rating



## NaturePainter Digital Canvas 1.2

### NATURAL MEDIA

Budget software that's driven by the mouse rather than the tablet

**Price** \$50

**Company** NaturePainter

**Web** [www.naturepainter.net](http://www.naturepainter.net)

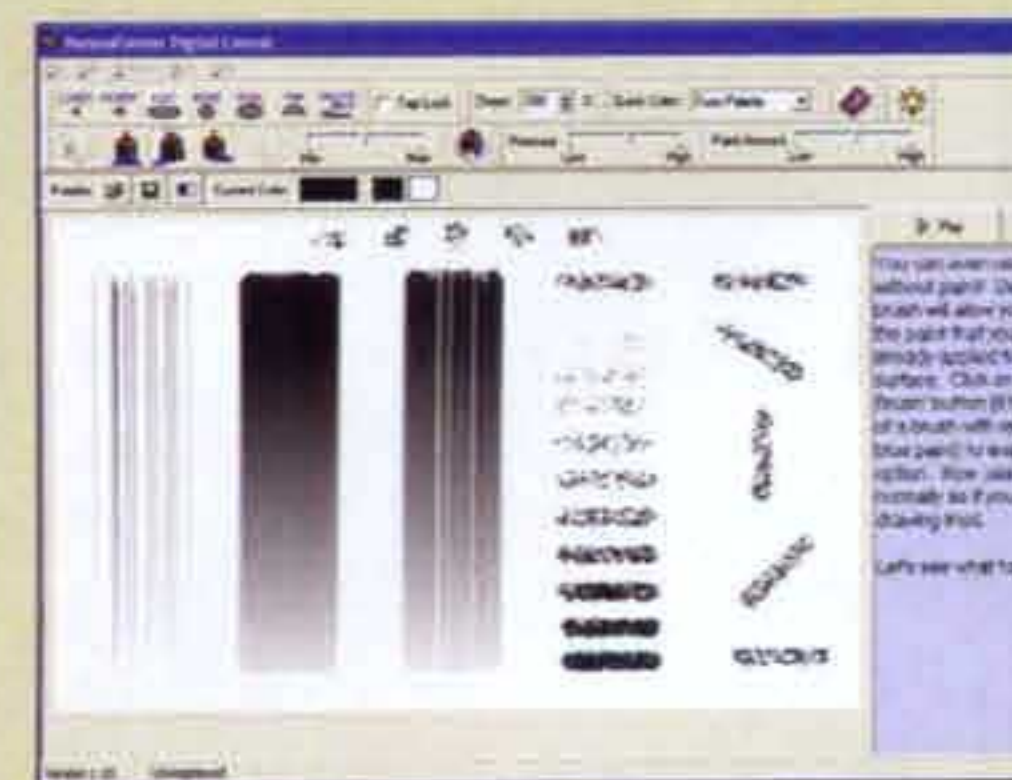
**Contact** email via website only

**Rating**

The strength behind many natural media applications is through the amount of control possible using a graphics tablet. However Digital Canvas doesn't assume you have such a luxury and provides similar features such as tapering brush strokes and natural paint effects to users of the humble mouse.

Many such effects are automated depending on which of the six brushes you choose, so you can paint away while the software generates natural looking strokes. And you can use the conveniently placed pressure and paint amount sliders to further modify your art.

A palette knife, dry brush effects and brush tapping is also available although look any further and you'll need to rely on your creativity. The software may be basic but the results can be reasonably impressive with a little time and effort.



A comprehensive range of video and text tutorials will quickly show you how to get up to speed with the software.



## HP Scanjet 4670vp

**SCANNER** The design and reduced footprint are certainly impressive, but what about the quality?

**Price** £149  
**Company** HP  
**Web** [www.hp.com/uk](http://www.hp.com/uk)  
**Contact** 0870 010 4320

**Rating** 

MAC  
&  
PC

Flatbed scanners have long ruled the domestic market due to their affordability and quality. Sheet-feeding scanners emerged to reduce the desk area needed, but the quality suffered, and now HP's innovative vertical scanner provides a little more room for your pencil case.

Although HP's claims of a six-second scan may be a little optimistic when dealing with detailed artwork, the results produced by this 2,400 DPI, 48-bit scanner are reasonably impressive. More realistic scan times are nearer to 30-plus seconds for a 4x6 colour photo, 25-plus seconds for a black-and-white drawing, or 40-plus seconds for a sheet of A4.

USB 2.0 connectivity provides a speed boost, and a comprehensive range of file formats are supported. Although possibly better suited to scanning office documents than artwork, the 4670 is a capable scanner for those with limited desk space.



The Scanjet 4670 isn't an ideal choice for scanning artwork, but it's a good option if desk space is limited.

The Canon EOS 350D is capable of producing better-quality images at large sizes than even the most expensive compact.



MAC  
&  
PC

## Canon EOS 350D

**DIGITAL SLR** The successor to the popular 300D boasts some powerful improvements, but how does it measure up to the best compacts?

**PRICE** £450 (body only) **COMPANY** Canon **WEB** [www.canon.co.uk](http://www.canon.co.uk) **CONTACT** 01737 220 000

**A**s the first affordable digital SLR, Canon's EOS 300D quickly became a favourite for artists in need of high quality photos to use as reference and texture tools for their artwork. The camera became the world's best-selling digital SLR, and last year it was superseded by the 350D.

With its 8MP DIGIC II sensor, the 350D is capable of producing larger pictures than the 300D with much reduced noise. And, although its three fps rate and up to 14-shot burst mode won't be essential if you're mostly shooting stationary objects, they come into their own when you're capturing moving objects.

In many ways the 350D can be likened to the semi-pro 20D model. Both produce the same size images and use the same sensor, and both cameras can also utilise the full range of Canon EF and EF-S lenses, so you'll

be able to capture all focal ranges with full manual control over the camera's settings. If you're a less-experienced photographer the various preset modes enable you to shoot everything from macro to landscapes effectively, and you'll be able to take advantage of the manual, aperture and shutter priority settings once you become more familiar with the controls.

The reduced body size is a matter of personal taste, and, as on the 300D, the button controls are a little cramped, whereas the 20D and newer 30D have more convenient scroll wheel controls. However, when you compare the 350D with even the most expensive compact camerax there's simply no competition: the interchangeable lenses, manual control options and superior sensor make the 350D a really great choice for artists wanting to produce large, high-quality images without spending a fortune. ●

### DETAILS

#### Features

- 8.0MP
- 3fps with up to 14-image burst mode
- DIGIC II sensor
- 7-point auto-focus
- DPP RAW image processing software
- RAW/JPG image capture
- USB 2.0 connectivity
- EF/EF-S lens compatible
- PictBridge compatible

#### Rating





This is a superb look at the concept art behind the latest Superman movie.



## The Art of Superman Returns

**CONCEPT ART** A glimpse behind the scenes of Bryan Singer's latest CG-packed motion picture...

**Author** Daniel Wallace **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £26  
**Web** [www.titanbooks.co.uk](http://www.titanbooks.co.uk) **ISBN** 1845763084

**T**here's something greatly appealing about concept art – especially that of major motion pictures. And especially that of the latest instalment of Superman. After all, any concept artist would give their left hand (or right, depending on dexterity) to work on such a project.

And that's why we were so excited to get our hands on this latest 'Art Of' book from Titan. Containing over 200 pieces of art – including costume design, environment paintings, storyboards and more – this book feels packed to the rafters; every illustration (apart from those originally in pen and ink that is) is full colour, and large images give this tome a real luxury feel.

The book is neatly divided into sections – looking at the conceptual art and designs behind characters and sets. Naturally it starts with the man of steel himself, focusing on the highly debated change of costume, and looking in detail at the texture of

the new, smaller S crest. It's this level of detail that makes the book so interesting. Another example of this comes in the Metropolis section, where you're treated to concepts of the entire city right down to artwork featuring on posters in bars.

The Metropolis section of the book is particularly impressive, with amazingly-detailed artwork from Tani Kunitake, Jeff Julian, Jim Feldman and others on show.

The Krypton section is a little short of art – and although it's undeniably impressive, we wish there was a little more in the way of concepts detailing Superman's ship and home planet. The final section, showing Lex Luthor, his henchmen and costumes (along with some cool storyboards) is a fitting end to a great book. If you love Superman, it's a no-brainer. If you love concept art, it's definitely worth a look. If you love both... well, you work it out.

**RATING**



## Further reading...

Manga for beginners, video game art and a series of workshops for fantasy artists

### The Complete Guide to Game Development, Art & Design



**Author** David McCarthy et al  
**Publisher** Ilex  
**Price** £20  
**Web** [www.ilex-press.co.uk](http://www.ilex-press.co.uk)  
**ISBN** 1904705480  
**RATING**

Covering all aspects of video game creation, from preproduction and art design through to marketing and finance, this is an interesting book packed with useful information. Featuring interviews and advice from industry figures, this a valuable asset for anyone wanting to learn more about the video game industry.

### Digital Manga Workshop Great advice for the budding artist



**Authors** Jared Hodges and Lindsay Cibos  
**Publisher** Ilex  
**Price** £17  
**Web** [www.ilex-press.co.uk](http://www.ilex-press.co.uk)  
**ISBN** 1904705464  
**RATING**

Try to ignore the western feel to the artwork, because this book is filled to the brim with advice and information essential to anyone wanting to create their own manga. Covering everything from hardware to drawing tips, this is a great book for anyone starting out in the world of digital art.

### Digital Fantasy Painting Workshop A guide to the world of fantasy art



**Author** Martin McKenna  
**Publisher** Ilex  
**Price** £18  
**Web** [www.ilex-press.com](http://www.ilex-press.com)  
**ISBN** 1904705375  
**RATING**

With 26 workshops in this book it's a shame that most of them are quite hard to get excited about. There's little inspiration to find in the artwork and a lot of it feels a little out of date. It's also disappointing to see some of the better work only receive two pages. Still, there's a lot of advice here, with plenty of tips and shortcuts. ●



Vendetta is a surprising triumph, with great comic book atmospherics and superb voice work from Hugo Weaving.



## V For Vendetta

**MASKED AVENGER** The Wachowskis finally find the key to making a half-decent Alan Moore adaptation...

**Distributor** Warner Home Video **Certificate** 15 **Price** £21

**A** Ian Moore may not have liked the script he originally read, but at least the finished *V for Vendetta* happily gets a lot more right than it does wrong. Adapting Moore's dystopian vision of a futuristic, fascist Britain, the creators of the *Matrix* trilogy have delivered a stylish, dramatic and well-crafted film.

With director James McTeigue at the helm, Hugo Weaving strapping on the mask, and Natalie Portman as the idealistic Evey Hammond, the plot is boiled down to the basics – V's campaign to make the population rise up against their corrupt government. Weaving breathes real life into the antihero – despite never showing his face, his theatrical tones are perfect for V. Portman has a lot less to do, but nevertheless shines as a woman caught up in events she finds spiralling out of control. Maintaining the dark tone

of the comic, *V for Vendetta* never quite settles into being either a drama or an action film, but it's still a superior comic book flick.

There's no commentary to be found, and predictably the Wachowski

brothers are nowhere to be seen either, but the extras cover just about any aspect of the movie's creation you could hope to explore. Freedom! Forever! charts the production progress, including a look at the miniatures used in the explosive scenes and V's mask. Designing The Future goes deeper into the movie's design. A pack of experts fills us in on the history of Guy Fawkes in Remember,

Remember: The Gunpowder Plot, while *England Prevails* is an interesting look back at the original comic's mid-'80s impact on the art form.

**RATING**



## Other new releases...

A surreal animation, and a good video game to film adaptation (finally)



### FANTASTIC PLANET

**Distributor** Eureka

**Certificate** PG

**Price** £20

**RATING**

This 1973 animated feature is a must-see for anyone with a taste for the surreal. A French/Czech co-production, its original title was *La Planète Sauvage* – The Savage Planet. And savage it certainly is – this ain't Bambi.

The setting is an alien world populated by two intelligent races. The Traags are blue-skinned giants with bulging red eyes. They treat Oms (descendants of Earthlings) as pets... or vermin to be ruthlessly gassed by exterminators.

The animation style recalls Monty Python, but the designs (by Roland Topor) are truly grotesque – the Traag planet is



populated by outlandish monstrosities that would be at home in Hieronymus Bosch's paintings. This DVD release gives you the choice of subtitled or dubbed versions, and adds two shorts by director René Laloux.



### SILENT HILL

**Distributor** Pathé

**Certificate** 15

**Price** £20

**RATING**

It's about time we got a good video game-to-film adaptation and Christophe Gans' *Silent Hill* is definitely a contender. The look and feel of the games has been brilliantly reproduced on screen and the monsters, most of which were created through the extensive use of make-up and latex rather than CGI, are as close to their in-game appearances as you can get. It has its weak points, not least of which is some overly heavy exposition towards the end of the second act, but it's a solid horror film nonetheless – and as far as video game adaptations



go, that makes it a masterpiece. The DVD release also includes a 55-minute 'Making Of' featurette which provides an in-depth examination of the monsters, as well as the casting, set construction and stunt work.





Howl's Moving Castle is worth persevering with – a great tale from a great storyteller.



## Howl's Moving Castle

**MAGIC STORY** Feel-good fantasy from an anime master

**Studio** Ghibli **Distributor** Optimum Releasing **Certificate** U **Price** £12

**H**owl is a charismatic magician with an alias in every town and a castle that roams the countryside on a pair of mechanical crow's feet. Sophie is a mousey young girl who works for her mother as a simple milliner.

The two are united by the sorcery of a jealous witch who, in the search for Howl's heart, turns Sophie into an old woman long before her time. With an English dub voiced by the likes of Lauren Bacall and Billy Crystal, this is an exceptional film.

In a slight departure for Studio Ghibli, Howl's Moving Castle has been adapted from a novel by the British author Diana Wynne Jones and, as it turns out, this has both advantages and disadvantages.

Following the book means that the film gains a fantastic set of

characters and a great sense of place. However, on the downside, it also makes the plot slightly awkward as the story is levered into Howl's 115-minute running time.

Fortunately the main characters are so vivid and their relationships so strong that the back-story becomes secondary to your wish to join their quest or just hang out in the castle trading bon mots with Billy Crystal's demon.

Like the castle of the title, this movie takes a fair while to get a head of steam up, so you need to put in a little effort at the beginning to really see how good this is.

Those familiar with Studio

Ghibli's past masterpieces will probably already know that this small investment will, as always, be very well rewarded.

**RATING**



## Also look at...

Supernatural children battle rampaging demons, and an eco-friendly princess...



### Gilgamesh: Orphans of the Apocalypse (eps 1-5)

**Studio** Group TAC

**Distributor** ADV

**Certificate** 12

**Price** £20

**RATING**

This is about children with hidden powers that can save the planet. On paper Gilgamesh is a mess of clichés, on screen it's something else: engrossing.

Animated in a hybrid style, Gilgamesh deploys Babylonian imagery and a brilliantly conceived score to great effect. Building climactically on the plot-turns and mysterious characters, this anime has great potential.

Some time in the future a terrorist attack transforms Earth's sky into a chaotic world where children are born



with incredible powers and the nights are stalked by demons.

What Gilgamesh does brilliantly is keep you guessing. Some of the characters could be more rounded but as a whole it works very well.



### Nausicaä - Of the Valley of the Wind

**Studio** Ghibli

**Distributor** Optimum Releasing

**Certificate** PG

**Price** £20

**RATING**

The world has suffered a disaster (again)! Nine-tenths of its surface has been covered by an ever-expanding forest of fungi populated by huge, outlandish insects. The remaining humans continue to fight and squabble from the safety of a few remaining patches of land. All except the inhabitants of the Valley of the Wind, and their princess, Nausicaä.

The genius here is giving the lead to Nausicaä – a princess who understands the nature of the encroaching bug kingdom. Her battle with the more warlike human factions is totally absorbing.



Though there are striking similarities with Miyazaki's later Princess Mononoke, this earlier film is a genuine treasure. You can feel the artists' love of their product in every frame. ●





# WEB ESSENTIALS

Everything you need to get started with your online portfolio...

## The blog approach

Let people know what you're up to and what work you're doing...

A blog is a great way of telling people about work in progress, latest commissions (copyright-permitting) and generally any thoughts you have. It offers an intimate and personal account of your day-to-day activities.

Setting up a blog doesn't even need any knowledge of HTML, and can be a great introduction into getting work on the web. Many sites let you set up your blog and host it for free on their servers. Such companies include Wordpress ([www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)) and Blogger ([www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)). Bear in mind that if you don't already have a hosting package/domain name, you'll have to have your web address followed by the company's domain name (yourname.wordpress.com) so it's not the most professional solution, but nevertheless a very handy one. Check out our



Rising Star Joshua James Shaw's blog (above) at <http://fadingoasis.blogspot.com> for an example of how a project can be documented online.

It's likely that you'll want to set up your blog on your own domain. We'd recommend Wordpress for this (although Blogger does it as well) as it comes with a great set of pro-looking themes. Find out more about the version you can use to get a blog on your domain at [www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org). There's a massive community that will be able to help you out with any queries or questions.



Setting up a blog is easy - just make sure you keep it updated!

**NEXT MONTH**  
Homepage design...

“It's likely that you'll want to set up your blog on your own domain... Wordpress is great for this!”



*Creating a blog is easy and keeping it updated even easier using Wordpress*

Wordpress offers a solution for anyone wanting to create a sophisticated blog.

## BLOGGING LINKS

### Wordpress

**URL:** [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)  
A simple to use and very professional-looking blogging service. For those of you wanting to have a blog on your own domain, check out [www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org). Trust us, it's a lot easier to configure than you'd think.

### Blogger

**URL:** [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)  
A widely used service and one that is extremely easy to set up. You can create a blog on either the company's servers or on your own site by following some intuitive wizards. Highly recommended.

### The Art Department

**URL:** <http://igallo.blogspot.com/>  
Not in here because it offers site design advice, just because it's a really good example of how to use an art blog to inform and entertain. Fantasy and SF Art Director Irene Gallo's site is well-written and always interesting.

## HOSTING LINKS

### NamesCo

**URL:** [www.names.co.uk](http://www.names.co.uk)  
With a wide range of services and packages to suit everyone from the beginner to accomplished web designer, NamesCo offers the complete service - from domain registering to hosting.

### 1&1 Internet

**URL:** [www.1and1.co.uk](http://www.1and1.co.uk)  
Billing itself as 'The world's No. 1' web host, 1&1 has a hosting/domain package suitable for anyone - whether you want a basic site, or all-singing, all-dancing dynamic content monster. Prices start at £4.69 per month.

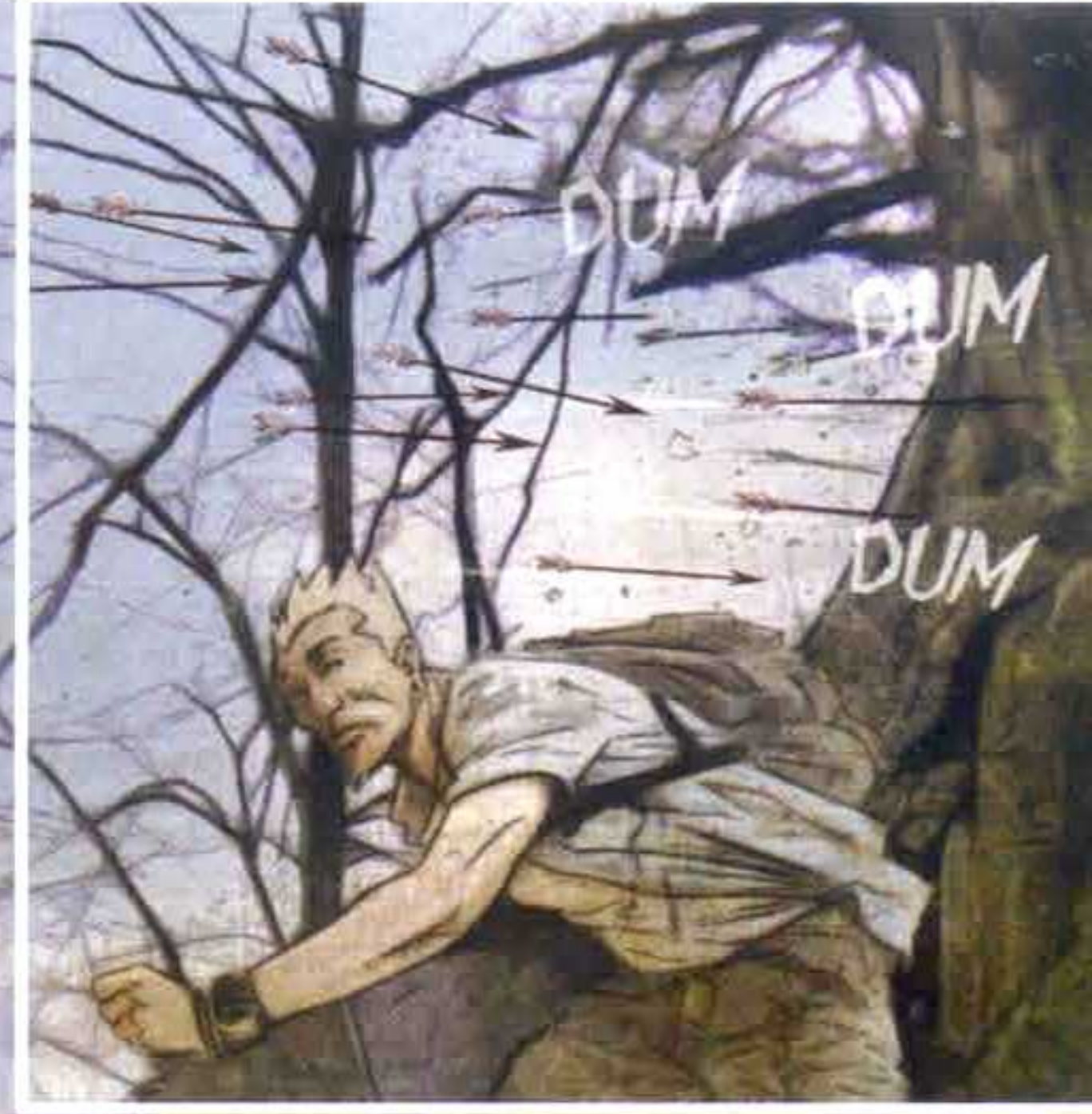
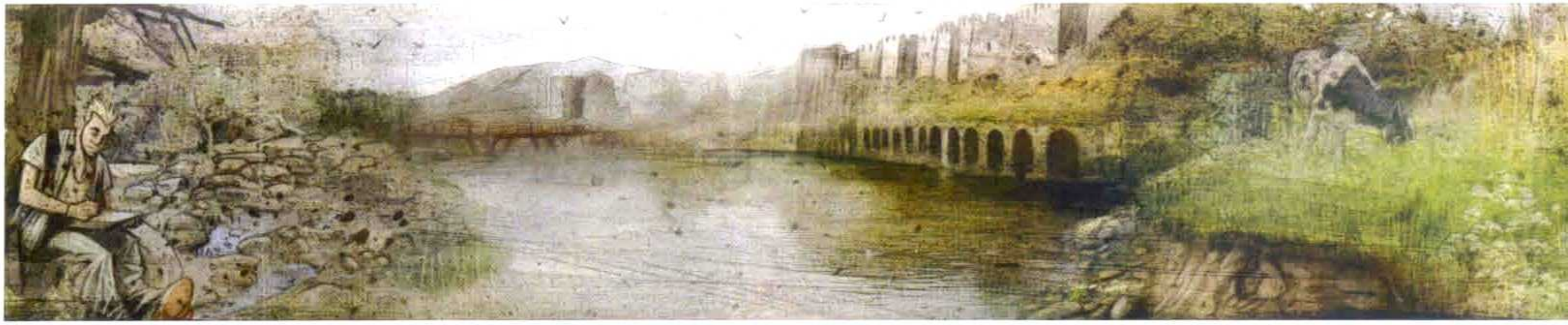
### Free Virtual Servers

**URL:** [www.freevirtualservers.com](http://www.freevirtualservers.com)  
Offering free hosting for life (with the condition you insert a snippet of code into your HTML), Free Virtual Servers is a good place for beginners to start looking for value hosting. There's also a good range of other services.

## HOSTING DEALS FOR YOUR SITE!







**ART-VENTURE** BY LEE CARTER





## Artists featured this issue...



### **Anthony S Waters**

"I honestly don't think I've  
got a style" **Page 44**



### **Brothers Hildebrandt**

"We always said art chose us,  
we didn't choose it" **Page 52**



### **Viktor Titov**

"I only took up digital painting  
just over a year ago" **Page 58**

